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## CONTENTS

A Community of Interests? — *Dominic Lieven* — 3
The Goose Path *(story)* — *Elizabeth Jolley* — 9
Is Teaching "Western Culture" Racist & Sexist? — *Sidney Hook* — 14
Column — *M* — 22

POEMS

*Julie Whitby 8, Alistair Elliot 13, Hugh Macpherson 20, John Greening 21, Lawrence Dugan 28, Simon Curtis 70, Phoebe Hesketh 73*

MEN & IDEAS

A Loose Wheel Spinning — *T. D. Rogers* — 25

NOTES & TOPICS

Labyrinth — *Nigel Clive* — 29
Of Coca & Carnations — *Nicholas Shakespeare* — 31

BOOKS & WRITERS

Rushdie, Steiner, Sobol & Others — *Leonie Lichtenstein* — 34
Religious Instincts, Sacred Landscapes — *Anthony Gardner* — 42
Anyone for President? — *Brian Dooley* — 45
Books Encountered — *R.M.* — 49

POINTS OF THE COMPASS

The Rose Garden & the East Wind — *Michael Sutton* — 50

CONTROVERSY

Anthropology's Auto-da-Fé — *Robin Fox* — 58

NORTH & SOUTH

Treasures of the Nation, Burdens of the People — *Leo Aylen* — 65

IN THE MARGIN

On Not Ending History — *Anthony Hartley* — 71

THEATRE

Chest & Discipline — *Malcolm Rutherford* — 74

BOXES

Ibn Batuta & Sitars . . . Columbus & the Piano *(Joseph Berger)* 17, "Barbarians Are In Our Midst" *(Joseph Berger)* 18

AUTHORS 57 — LETTERS 76 — LIFE & LETTERS 80

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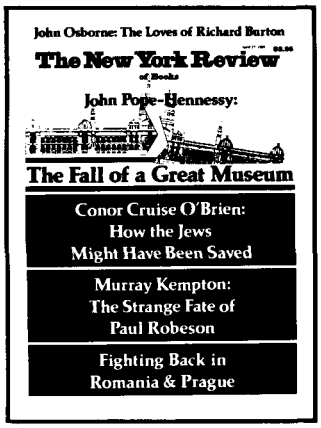


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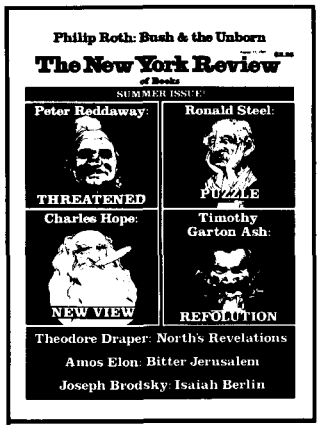


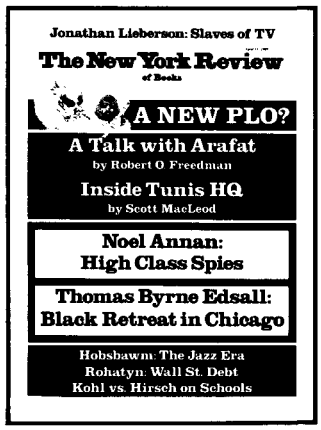


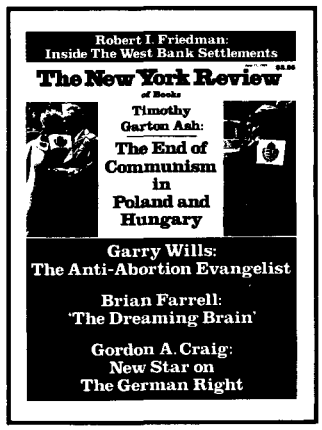


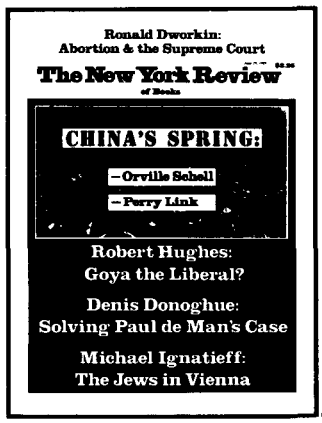


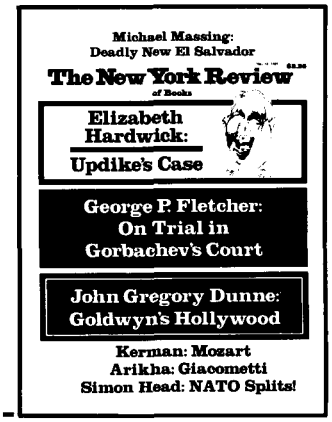


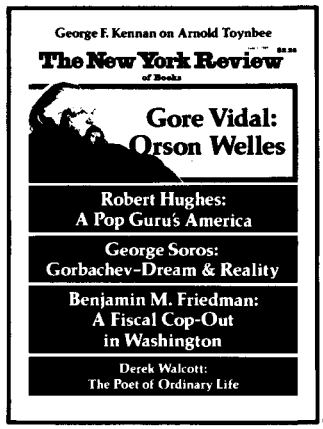


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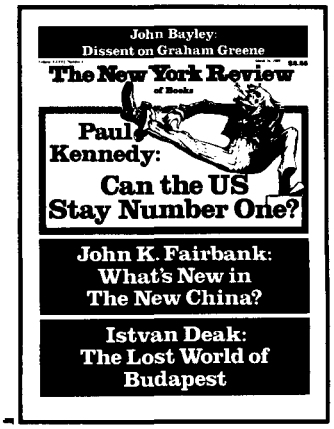


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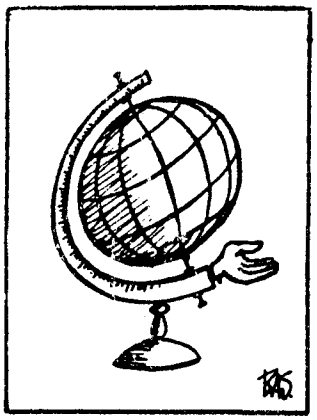
*Dominic Lieven*

# A Community of Interests?

## *Soviet Reforms, European Dilemmas*



RUSSO-GERMAN relations are the most important factor in current European politics. Thus it has been for most of the 20th century. Even in 1900 perceptive onlookers were aware of the fact that only the Russians or the Germans had the potential to dominate the European continent. Of their possible competitors the French were too weak, economically and demographically, to have any chance of reasserting the dominance they had possessed in the 17th century and briefly regained under Napoleon. Britain was, it is true, still a superpower, but even in its heyday the United Kingdom never paid Europe the compliment of seeking to dominate it. On the contrary, Britain attempted to secure its rear by maintaining a balance of power in the European Continent while using its sovereignty of the seas to create a massive and highly profitable formal and informal non-European empire. Indeed, other factors apart, Britain's geographical position as a relatively small island on Europe's western extremity better fitted this policy of maritime sovereignty than any effort to impose hegemony on the European continent would have done.

Germany, on the other hand, was placed in the centre of Europe. Even today, the German peoples of the *FDR*, *DDR*, Austria and Switzerland make up the second-largest language community in Europe. The creation of the Hohenzollern Empire in 1871 was far from bringing all Europe's Germans under a single sceptre. Add the German diaspora in the Russian Empire and Eastern Europe to the Austrians and the Swiss and there turn out to be almost as many Germans outside the Second *Reich* as within it. Nevertheless, even the partially united Germany of the *Kaiserreich* was a formidable power, a potential leader of all Europe. This was not only because of the German Empire's population or strategic position. Over the last century the Germans have shown themselves to be Europe's most productive, skilled and efficiently organised community. And, given the tremendous achievements of German literary and musical culture, it would be unfair to assert that the pre-eminence has been purely in the material sphere. The *FDR* is by some way the most powerful country in the European Community, and the *DDR* makes even communism work somewhat more efficiently than anywhere else.

The pattern of German pre-eminence was well established under the *Kaiserreich*. Imperial Germany had the most dynamic economy in Europe, the most skilled work-force, the best educational system, the most efficient civil service and the most formidable army. Then, as now, Germany had a potentially vast contribution to make to Europe and some right to assert a claim to leadership in European affairs.

EVEN BEFORE 1914, Germany's greatest threat was Russia. It is true that in almost every respect Imperial Russia was backward by German standards. But the Empire's resources were vast and the rapid economic growth that set in from the 1880s quickly brought them into play. The Czarist state, ramshackle in some ways, effectively promoted rapid industrialisation and had a formidable tradition of social control and military expansionism. The Russian ruling class, wayward in some respects, nevertheless contributed far more to 19th-century European literature and music than the aristocracy of any other country. In the early 20th century, Russia's rulers had every reason to pospone their bid to dominate Europe. Peace would allow the Russian Empire to develop its incomparably vast human and natural resources. Moreover, intelligent conservatives, of whom there were quite a number in the Czarist government, could see that war with Germany might well lead to socialist revolution in Russia.

When war came in 1914 it was not of Petersburg's choosing. In Berlin, on the other hand, influential circles, particularly military ones, believed that Russia had to be crushed before she was able to develop her resources sufficiently to mount an unstoppable advance towards hegemony in Europe.

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World War I was above all a conflict between Russia and Germany for domination of East-Central Europe, an area encompassing the Habsburg Empire, the Balkans and the swathe of non-Russian borderlands of the Czarist Empire. Whichever power eliminated its rival and dominated this vast region had every chance in the longer run of being able to impose its will on the whole of Europe. Through an extremely incompetent and uncoordinated pre-War foreign policy, Berlin succeeded in provoking not just this conflict with Russia but also, simultaneously, a competition with Britain for maritime and colonial supremacy. This allowed the British ruling élite to fight alongside France and Russia in the cause of the European balance of power with a united anti-German population behind it.

Even against such a formidable coalition, the Germans almost won the Great War. Russia's withdrawal from the Allied cause came quickly after the Revolution of March 1917. April 1917 witnessed the USA's declaration of war, more than filling the gap left by Russia. The German admirals' foolish and boastful estimate that their submarines would bring Britain to its knees in weeks if allowed unrestricted warfare was responsible for the USA's move, which robbed Germany of its best chance of victory. Yet even then, with the Habsburg Empire still in existence and the Russian Empire dismembered at Brest-Litovsk, success still lay in Berlin's grasp. To retain the gains of Brest-Litovsk any sacrifice in the West would have been worth while, even to the extent of buying off the French and British with Belgium and much or all of Alsace-Lorraine. A Germany which offered such terms and fought a war of defensive attrition on the Western Front would in time have exhausted the willingness of French, British or even American soldiers to die in order that the "German order" in Eastern Europe be overturned. However, rejecting a policy of combined political-military methods, the German élite in 1918 took the same path as in the winter of 1916-17, seeking total victory by purely military means. This time it was the generals not the admirals who got their calculations wrong and Ludendorff's offensive destroyed Imperial Germany.

WHETHER GERMAN defeat in World War I was to Europe's advantage is a moot point. German victory would have denied true independence to the other peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, possibly in the longer run to all Europeans. Military triumph and the incorporation of large numbers of non-Germans into the *Reich* would greatly have strengthened the authoritarian and chauvinist currents already so evident in Wilhelmine politics before 1914. On the other hand, for most of Eastern and Central Europe's peoples, independence was both dearly bought and short-lived, while a Pax Germanica would have ensured at least peace and possibly growing prosperity as well. Above all, German victory would have deprived the 20th century of both Hitler and Stalin: the former was largely the product of defeat and Versailles; the latter would have led the brutal and obscure life he deserved, since a victorious German Empire would not have tolerated a Bolshevik Russia for long.

The major problem with the European settlement which emerged from Germany's defeat in 1918 was that it made a second great war probable. Germany and Russia remained Europe's only potential superpowers in 1918, yet, by a combination of circumstances no one could have predicted in 1914, both were among the ranks of the defeated. The Versailles Treaty dismembered both their empires. Germany's defeat and "the Versailles order" could, however, never have occurred without US intervention in Europe and the commitment of massive British land forces to a continental war. These phenomena were unprecedented and temporary. The USA retreated into isolation and Britain, by the 1930s, found itself attempting to defend a far-flung empire against a number of predators with economic resources that were manifestly inadequate for the task. Maintenance of "the Versailles order" depended on the French, who were far too weak in the long run to hold Germany and Russia to a *status quo* which both powers saw as illegitimate and contrary to their interests. Attempts at appeasement were inevitable, the only questions being whether to appease Russia or Germany; whether a policy of appeasement would actually succeed in securing Moscow's or Berlin's acceptance of a modified "Versailles order"; or whether, on the contrary, Russia and Germany would act together to destroy the 1919 settlement (as to some extent they did both at Rapallo and in 1939).

STALIN'S ATTITUDE to the German threat in the 1930s was coloured by ideology, albeit in a negative manner. True to Leninism, he made no moral distinction between democratic and fascist régimes, which he was only too happy to set against each other. His final decision for agreement with Hitler in 1939 rather than alliance with the Western Powers was influenced by these considerations as well as by a number of other calculations. Stalin did not trust the Western powers to be effective military allies should he become involved in a war with Hitler. Like Nicholas II, he also knew that time was on Russia's side if she could but avoid war and develop her human and material resources. Most importantly, Stalin miscalculated—believing that if the USSR stepped aside a stalemate would ensue on the Western front which would weaken all the capitalist powers and improve the USSR's position. The rapid elimination of France in 1940 was wholly unexpected and left the Soviet Union isolated in the face of a Germany able to mobilise the resources of most of Europe against it. More realistic, single-minded and ruthless than Wilhelm II, Hitler had always seen the destruction of the USSR as the chief task facing Germany in its drive to master Europe. In June 1941, the real war began for Hitler.

All other things being equal, Soviet victory in the War and the elimination of Germany as an independent state spelled Russian domination of Europe. Even had Soviet troops not marched all the way to the Atlantic—and at times after 1945 there was not much to stop them from so doing—socio-economic chaos in Western Europe allied to the strength of the French and Italian Communists left the continent at Stalin's mercy. American intervention saved Europe from this fate, in the process creating an unequal relationship which

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from Washington's perspective came to resemble that of a patient parent with ungrateful and unruly children, or rather adolescents. As is their wont, the children bit the (American) hand that fed them and combined denunciations of guardianship with shrieks of dismay at the slightest hint of parental distancing. Since the Europeans, despite having ruined themselves and much of the rest of the world in two enormous civil wars, were inclined to parade their own superior wisdom and experience in relation to American naivety, exasperation in Washington was understandable. Indeed, a cynic in Moscow or Washington might argue that the greatest service to Europeans provided by the two superpowers was to deprive them of responsibility for their own fates and the chance to commit further acts of suicide. More kindly, one could note that American intervention gave Europeans a breathing-space during which they could rebuild their strength, and create institutions and attitudes which would preserve peace and prosperity in Europe as and when superpower guardianship was removed.

To some extent Europeans used that breathing-space to advantage. The return of prosperity to Western Europe made the region largely proof against revolution from within. Franco-German *rapprochement* removed a major cause of instability and conflict, laying the foundations for the creation of a European Community through which German energies and talents could be deployed to the benefit of stability and prosperity throughout Europe. The risks, both to other Europeans and to the Germans themselves, of German power combined with German nationalism were allayed.

Yet the process is very far from complete and it is by no means certain that, if left to their own devices, Europeans will succeed in maintaining stability, peace and prosperity throughout the continent. The coming of 1992 and the dismantling of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe, occurring side by side, have the capacity to make or break each other. Certainly, they represent the greatest challenge to European statesmanship since 1945. On the European Community partly lies the burden of bringing the states of Eastern Europe back into the world economy in as rapid and peaceful a manner as possible. On it, too, will lie inevitably part of the responsibility for mediating long-standing ethnic and territorial disputes in East-Central Europe which will erupt if the Soviet *gendarme* really goes home. And in the longer term, a solution will also have to be found within the European Community to the German people's undoubted right to self-determination and the impact this will have on the European balance of power.

Seriously to raise such issues is to stress how rapidly events have moved in the last four years. Of course, underlying this movement are longer-term shifts in the world's balance of power. It is by now a cliché to talk of the relative decline of the two superpowers and of the shared interest of Russians and Americans in shifting resources to the domestic economy. Failure to increase economic efficiency and productivity risks reducing the superpowers to second-class status in a world where economic power is a surer means to global influence than massive armaments, whose very size and horror forbid their effective use. More specifically, the sudden opening-up of opportunities in Europe owes most to the failure of Soviet socialism both as an ideology and as an economic system, and above all to the Soviet élite's own dawning recognition of this fact.

In part, the Soviet ruling élite's revulsion against Brezhnevism and turn towards reform was rooted in a puritanical strain of party patriotism best embodied by Yuri Andropov. One found here a certain asceticism, a conviction that a ruling élite, if it was to justify its position and prove effective, could not afford to avoid harsh decisions and wallow in corrupt self-indulgence on the Brezhnevite scale. For all the rather unlikely accusations of corruption that have recently surrounded his name, Yegor Ligachev stands foursquare within this strain. Not only this group but all the more far-sighted members of the élite understood that, although the USSR was not yet on the point of demise, continued postponement of reform would face the next generation with dangers from which there genuinely might be no room for escape. Much better educated and more aware than the Brezhnevite oligarchy of events in the outside world, by the late '70s some of the élite's younger members chafed under the awareness of just how quickly the USSR was losing ground to its Western rivals. Shame at the backwardness and mess of Soviet life was combined with a commitment to the maintenance of the Soviet Union's leading role in world affairs into the 21st century. Such pretensions were understood to be incompatible not just with an economic system unable to bear the price of defence and empire, but also with a society wracked with cynicism and alienation as a result of the failure to provide the most basic goods and services and the attempt to cover up this failure by barren ideological pronouncements and a plethora of lies.

Above all, of course, there was Mikhail Gorbachov, without whom reform would never have taken as radical and political a path as has been the case since the winter of 1986-87. Gorbachov's ultimate inspiration lies in a form of Soviet Russian patriotism whose essence is partly a commitment to Russia's international standing but also an instinctive sense that the true Russian must be a socialist of a sort, and must share not only a basic loyalty to the Party's cause but also some of the instinctive egalitarian, collectivist and populist values whose roots lie in the villages of pre-Soviet Russia. Committed to restoring Russian prestige, power, prosperity and health, Gorbachov would dearly have loved to pursue his complicated and dangerous programme of reform with as few difficulties as possible from either the non-Russian minorities of the USSR or the Eastern European satellites. At least where the latter are concerned, however, he should have been realistic enough to know from the start that if a Soviet reformer ignored the potential impact of his reforms on the satellites he was doomed to failure.

This was a lesson taught by both Soviet and Russian history. The legitimacy and control of a régime being stronger in the Russian heartland than in the non-Russian periphery, the risk is always that reforms emanating from Petersburg or Moscow will bring revolt in the borderlands. This is what happened in 1863 when Alexander II's programme of liberal

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reforms was derailed by revolution in Poland, and it is also what happened in Hungary in 1956. Equally, the faint reforming tendencies of the 1960s' collective leadership were crucially weakened by the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

By the early 1980s it was evident that, even without Gorbachov, the East European situation was unstable. The Polish crisis had just about been temporarily contained but no economic upturn or longer-term solutions were in sight. Together with the Hungarians, the Poles faced additional crisis because of the mountainous foreign debts they had amassed. Indeed, the problem with Eastern Europe was not just that the maintenance of the *status quo* was difficult to square with the pursuit of Gorbachov's policy of domestic reform, but also that in some countries the local *status quo* was disintegrating of its own accord. To attempt to preserve it through outside intervention meant to commit the USSR to a long-term policy of economic subsidy and periodic military intervention—for how otherwise were unviable economic systems supported by illegitimate and unpopular régimes to be maintained?

Yet such a long-range commitment was unacceptable to Moscow, partly on financial grounds and partly because intervention in Eastern Europe would inevitably wreck both Gorbachov's domestic reforms and any chance of achieving his foreign policy goals *vis-à-vis* both the Americans and the West Europeans. In the name of these objectives, Gorbachov's government appears to have set its mind resolutely against military intervention in the satellites' affairs, come what may. Of course, no one can wholly predict how the Politburo might react in the event of crisis in Eastern Europe. By now, however, the message of absolute non-intervention coming from Moscow is so strong that it must represent Gorbachov's firm view, reversal of which would only come with his own overthrow. For unless he genuinely means not to intervene in any circumstances, what possible sense is there in removing the threat of the ultimate Soviet veto which has always been a major factor in the political stability of East-Central Europe?

LOGIC THEREFORE suggests that Gorbachov has accepted the probability that the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe will, wholly or in part, abandon socialism and achieve at least internal autonomy. Of course he does not welcome this trend, nor will he speed it along. On the contrary, he must know that it will deal a further blow to Soviet socialism's legitimacy within the USSR, to its reputation for invincible strength, and to its claim that history is on its side, all of which have in the past been important elements in the Soviet régime's own stability. He will weigh these factors in the balance as he decides what to do about Eastern Europe. He is as committed to Communist Party rule and to some form of socialism as Metternich and Bismarck were to the pre-eminence of the aristocracy in 19th-century Europe. Like them, he is forced to operate in a world which appears to be moving away from the class to which he is committed and the values on which their rule is based. Temperamentally, he is probably more likely to act like a Bismarck, accepting modern trends up to a point and seeking by radical means to accommodate them as best he can to the interests and values which he represents. A Metternichian policy of clinging to legitimist principle and delaying the inevitable as long as possible will probably not appeal to him.

A Soviet leader who did accept the inevitability of Eastern Europe's Finlandisation and with it, ultimately, the need for German self-determination could derive major advantages from this policy. Hints of a re-united Germany would remind Poles and Czechs that they too were beneficiaries of the 1945 settlement, whose ultimate guarantor is the USSR. In addition, Moscow could hope that the bill for rescuing the East European economies from the ravages of Communism and restoring them to international competitiveness would be picked up in Bonn and Brussels. This, in turn, would be a mighty headache for the governments of Western Europe, who, after years of rather easy rhetoric on the subject of Communist violations of human rights, would be faced with requests from nascent East European democracies for subsidies, low EC tariffs for their agricultural produce, and free access to the EC labour market for the growing numbers of their unemployed. Western Europe's horror at such demands would be a cold shower for the fledgling democracies of Eastern Europe, which would be enduring simultaneously all the inevitable hardship entailed in transformation to a market economy and the restoration of international competitiveness. This might do something to lessen the detestation of the USSR bred over the last four decades in Eastern Europe. In any event, these decades have taught lessons in geopolitical realities which would, one imagines, dissuade fledgling East European democracies from challenging Soviet territorial integrity or strategic interests.

THE MOST OBVIOUS benefit the USSR would derive from Finlandising Eastern Europe and putting the German question on the agenda would come in its relations with the *FDR*. A very high economic and political price could surely be extorted from Bonn for such concessions. This would entail not only loans but also the likely removal of the *FDR*, *de facto* if not *de jure*, from NATO. The least a Soviet government could ask for would be mutual recognition of the principle that no foreign armies should stand on national soil in Europe. The Warsaw Pact is in total disarray—the Polish, Hungarian, Czech and Romanian armed forces being worse then useless from a Soviet perspective. In these circumstances, why not consign NATO with the Pact to the grave, thus achieving the Europe without military alliances of which Gorbachov talks? Of course, acceptance of association, or even unity, between the two Germanies runs in the face of Soviet policy since 1945 and of Russian experience throughout this century. But a united Germany no longer needs to be feared as it quite rightly was both by the Czars and Stalin. The USSR's possession of formidable nuclear armaments makes its boundaries secure whatever its relative economic backwardness—something that was emphatically not true before 1939. The idea that even a reunited Germany would challenge the 1945 territorial settlement by force is a chimera.

In any event, even the association of a still autonomous

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East German state with the EC, let alone full-scale German reunification, would awaken fears in Paris, London, Madrid and Rome of a renewed German hegemony in Europe. A certain natural community of interests would emerge between East and West in Europe, faced with the threat of an over-mighty centre. A Soviet Union with a special relationship with Bonn, with the ability to play off Western and Central European capitals, and with a hint of a German "threat" to help its relations with its ex-satellites would not be in a hopeless position in Europe. Moreover, geopolitical realities would ensure that, even with its troops pulled back across the Polish border, the USSR remained militarily much the most powerful state on the continent—a position whose advantages are all the greater if the threat involved is unspoken and hidden.

SUCH SCENARIOS must give West European leaders food for thought. Is the effective defence of Western Europe conceivable given universal acceptance of the principle of no foreign troops on German soil, or without the *FDR* in NATO? Can any concessions on disarmament wrung from Moscow guarantee West European security, given geopolitical realities in our continent? Could the EC accept the East Germans into its ranks or even a reunited German state? What can West Europeans do to ensure that the power and genius of the German people is harnessed to the cause of European security, prosperity and cooperation? What should West Europeans do as regards bringing East Europeans back into a world of liberal democracy and competitive economics? Can the EC establish itself as an effective force for unity and prosperity in West and West-Central Europe, with the will and the resources to use carrot and stick with the ex-Soviet satellites—wooing them with prospects of economic growth but also possibly disciplining them by economic sanctions? All of these are questions of principle and to answer them is only part of the problem. Once they are answered the issue arises of the means by which principles are to be realised. Merely to pose these questions, however, is to demand of European leaders a degree of radicalism and statesmanship beyond that which has been required of them in recent history.

Perhaps the greatest danger for Western Europe lies in the risk that Gorbachov will attempt radically to alter intra-European relations and will fall from power with his policy well under way but far short of completion. Even now the situation within the USSR is ominous. One million relatively clear-headed Estonians are a manageable proposition; 20 million Uzbeks and 45 million Ukrainians would not be. The economic situation is worsening, and the radical policies which might reverse decline will be deeply unpopular in the short to medium term. Combine anti-Russian pogroms in the republics with nothing to buy in the shops and the crisis would become acute, especially in an era of *glasnost*, semi-opposition political groupings, and growing lack of fear of the authorities. On top of this, the collapse of the Soviet position in Eastern Europe would be a further blow to the régime's legitimacy and to the aura of might and invincibility in which it has traditionally clothed itself. A faint smell of 1789 and 1917 is in the air as fury at the élite's privileges, distrust of the régime and total disbelief in its ideology reach new heights. Even the extreme, and really very unfair, dislike with which Raisa Gorbachov is viewed brings back memories of Alexandra Fyodorovna and Marie Antoinette.

IN THE NEAR FUTURE the régime's overthrow is, of course, scarcely on the cards. The army and police remain loyal and formidable. Communist régimes are, for all their weaknesses, extremely effective mechanisms for exercising coercion and are ruthless when under threat. One does not need to be a Stalinist to feel that Gorbachov's reforms have undermined political stability: this is simply the truth. Instability will almost certainly grow in the next few years and the rulers' nerve may crack. The élite's interests will certainly be challenged even further. A Peking on the streets of Moscow is not to be ruled out and nor is the return to power of a much more hard-line leadership. If the political crisis were to deepen significantly, a new leadership would be very insecure. They would be determined to maintain their country's prestige through their foreign policy, and to show that they were tough, resolute, and by no means condemned to history's dustbin.

Great powers on the slide are always very uncomfortable neighbours. Multi-ethnic empires whose rulers fear, often in an exaggerated manner, that their state is on the verge of dissolution, are even worse. A combination of great-power arrogance, determination to maintain international standing, and a mood of crisis arising from the internal nationalities problem led Austria's rulers to start World War I. There is always the fear that in certain circumstances Gorbachov's successors might also be willing to indulge in excessively risky foreign policies for similar reasons.

The danger would lie not only in the nature of the new Soviet leadership and the domestic crisis it was facing, but also in the uncertainty and instability of international relations in Europe. The European *status quo* since 1948 has been highly unjust to East Europeans but very stable. An optimist might hope that the new European order which would emerge after 1992 and Soviet decolonisation of Eastern Europe would be both just and stable. In the meantime, however, instability is inevitable. A number of years hence, the German question may be well and truly on the agenda, and multiparty democracies may be struggling to establish themselves in a number of East European states. Western Europe will have invested not only hope but also hard cash in the East. The lines between Europe's two blocs will have become blurred. The appearance at that point of an insecure, aggressive and nationalist leadership in Moscow, desperate to show its resolution and power, would be a cause of major uncertainty and fear. Areas of conflict between that régime, East European public opinion, and the West European states are only too easy to imagine.

FROM A PURELY selfish West European perspective one might argue that none of this matters too much. The return to power of hard-liners in Moscow might weaken, even reverse,

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the progress of reform in Eastern Europe; it is much less likely to challenge the fundamental interests, let alone security, of Western Europe. The latter rests on the US alliance, on the military power of NATO in Europe and on nuclear deterrence. In 1914 one could start a European war and hope to win it—that is, to achieve by military means vital goals which were otherwise beyond one's grasp. Even in 1939, *blitzkrieg* made war rational by offering possibilities of victory on the cheap. Now, so the argument goes, no one believes that war in Europe is winnable, so no one would start one. Here though is the rub. A few years hence the *FDR* may not be an effective member of NATO, and there may be no foreign troops on its soil. The logical response to this would be a close Anglo-French military alliance and a strengthening of links across the Atlantic. With peace breaking out in Europe, however, geopolitical logic and Western public opinion might head off in diametrically opposite directions, to the extent that even the Anglo-French nuclear deterrent might not be safe. In any event, a shift of régime in Moscow and major uncertainties springing from this in East-Central Europe could easily come at a time when NATO is in confusion; its present plans for fighting a defensive war in Germany obsolete, and with nothing clear-cut in a position to replace them. That is not a scenario to make Western Europeans sleep too soundly in their beds.

On the other hand one could argue, as Gorbachov does as regards internal Soviet affairs, that the European *status quo* is unacceptable and, in the longer run, unstable. To change it entails risks and instability, but these have to be accepted. Certainly, if Gorbachov chooses to accept these risks and to open the way to radical change in Europe, we shall have to live with it, whether we like it or not.

## A Shared Account

The mother-of-pearl sideboard glistens as we talk
in the half-gloom. My first meals-on-wheels meal.
I grimly hope, the last. Excrement
the prevailing smell, taste almost. He's still
in bed, too sick to eat. "Overdone the alcohol?"
He agrees for once, swigging at his Guinness,
undeterred. The clear green chime of that garden
behind us comes from another continent,
as far from all this as South Africa,
the homeland he claims he's going to revisit.
Not someday, but now. "Is my hair all right?"
Ivory-coloured, overgrown. And what of your eyes?
"He must be an actor", they'd said
of those large, thoughtful eyes. The familiar hat,
then scarf wrapped round, and we're off—not once
but three times as cheque-book is forgotten
time and again. He leans on me heavily.
"What have you done to your thumb?"
"Faeces", he replies off-handedly.
A jolt. He's not joking either.

At the bank, we're referred to the sub-manager:
I've just paid in a sum belonging
to Peter's wife long dead, into his account.
It takes an age for him to succeed
in sitting down. The manager's politely
nondescript. "Could you bring us the death certificate?"
"Well, I dunno. I dunno where it is.
I suppose I must have it." *Very* doubtful this.
"I'm afraid if you don't, all we can do
is to let your account remain a shared account."
We depart, with cash. No luck at the aliens' office.
though. He wants to get British nationality,
after thirty years. But the right office is at "Croydon!
Better re-think. I'm buggered if I'm going to Croydon."
On our return, the sweet sharp stare of the garden
is still as far as the carnage in South Africa,
as the sideboard glistens hopelessly in the gloom.

*Julie Whitby*

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# *Elizabeth Jolley*

# *The Goose Path*

*"Along the ridge ran a faint foot-track . . . . Those who knew it well called it a path; and while a mere visitor would have passed it unnoticed even by day, the regular haunters of the heath were at no loss for it at midnight. The whole secret of following these incipient paths, when there was not light enough in the atmosphere to show a turn-pike road, lay in the development of the sense of touch in the feet, which comes with years of night rambling in little trodden spots. To a walker practised in such places a difference between impact on maiden herbage, and on the crippled stalks of a slight footway, is perceptible through the thickest boot or shoe."*

**Thomas Hardy,** THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE

THREE PEOPLE, after giving me good advice, died. I don't mean that they dropped dead in front of me as soon as their wisdom fell from their lips. But it seemed as if death followed soon after their parting with certain useful suggestions. Of course other people, now dead, have uttered warnings and promises of conditional success, my father and mother, for example and a succession of governesses and, later, teachers.

Mrs Morton, I always think of her when I'm walking up this part of the firebreak on the Morton's side of the property—Mrs Morton, who was always watching to see what I was doing, told me to burn the broken handle of the mattock.

"Throw it on the fire and burn it out", she said. I would never have thought to do this and would have worked a long time at the split wood trying to cut it away. It's when I come alongside her old duck pens that I always think of her and how she used to appear at the fence. She was already sick then. Her kidneys were all shrivelled up, she often told me. As she became more seriously ill her face, normally gaunt, looked round. Puffed with fluid, I suppose. The roundness made me see something of the child she must have been, and I remember this too and feel sorry. To be reminded that there was once a child, with all the shy hopes of childhood, and who is still a part of the adult, is sad.

The second person was an old woman, a long time ago, a patient in a hospital in Glasgow. She said to tap a tin all round, tap tap tap on its side, on the edge of a table—the sort of tin with a screw lid—and then it would unscrew easily. Vaseline or boot polish, she said, that sort of tin. She died the night she told me this. I, as the recipient of the advice, did not die. I do not remember now what sort of tin it was I was trying to open, certainly not boot polish. Vaseline perhaps. It used to be in tins.

The third person I am not able to remember at all, who it was and what sort of advice. And every time, going uphill on this soft ploughed earth of the firebreak, on a level with the empty Morton duck pens, I try to remember what this third piece of good advice was, who gave it to me, and the subsequent death of the person giving it. All I can think of just here is that when Mr Morton told me that Mrs Morton had died he could hardly speak for his grief. His eyes were red and swollen with weeping and I understood that I was face to face at this fence with someone who really loved another person and that he would never get over something which is often brushed aside in the word bereavement. Sometimes now, after all this time, he speaks about Mrs Morton and the tears well up in his innocent elderly eyes and it is as if she has just died all over again and left him alone in his paddocks here at the edge of the bush for ever. Because of this it is possible to know that love exists where the idea of it may be overlooked. Love is not just something for the beautiful and the rich, or between the intellectually refined or the more poetic people.

It does not matter not remembering the third piece of advice, for if I did I should not tell it here as I am of the opinion that something should always be held in reserve. Everything should not be told, it is better to keep some things to yourself. It might be too that one day, on this soft warm earth, I shall recall the third wise remark and, forgetting the habit of secrecy, perhaps tell it to someone right here by the duck pens . . . .

THIS BIT OF FENCE is made like a kind of gate. The wire can be unhooked to let a fire truck or a flock through if necessary. Looking at it you would not see straight away that it can be opened to make a way through. Once a ram, belonging to Mr Morton, was caught by the horns in the ringlock. I tried to get the ram off. He was angry at being caught and kept pushing against the fence. His pushing and his horns being so curled made his freedom impossible. I kept going away, trying to forget him and trying



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to get on with some work but all the time wondering how to get him free. In the end I thought the only way would be to cut the ringlock and ruin the fence. I came back up here with the wire cutters to find that, by some miracle, the ram had freed his own horns and had gone right away across the Mortons' paddock.

When walking I seem to stop by this bit of fence, inadvertently recalling these same random events rather like the recollecting of a sequence of unrelated thoughts and experiences in the ritual of falling asleep. Mrs Morton fell through here once when she was trying to bring me a gift—a cake smothered in cream which, having to be held carefully, caused her to lose her balance. I was all morning painting her wounds with a yellow antiseptic and bandaging the worst ones. The cake, lying where it fell, was an intrusion.

The bleached long grass of my orchard pursues me as if on fire already as I make my way up the slope. I often stop by this particular part of the fence because part of the orchard is up here. My plum trees are here on the left and often I am doing things to them, the things with a sharp pruning knife, which are supposed to be done for fruit trees at different times of the year. The plum trees are Satsuma, President, Golden Drop and the Blue Prune plum. There are peaches and nectarines in this part too. The long grass from the cultivated places spreads a little more, every year, into the bush, and the bush invades the orchard. Some of the fruit trees have grass trees, or black-boys as they are called, growing close to them without harm to either.

Perhaps, really, it is better to take a walk in a place where there is no responsibility. To keep on up the fire-break, which is what I usually do, is to be concerned about the places where it is not of the regulation width, though in a real fire even the correct width is of little use. A bush fire, rampant, leaps across the tops of trees, across roads and rivers and it races over the baldest paddocks. It is usually a sudden change in the direction of the wind which is the saving thing.

To stop here between the Morton duck pens and my fruit trees is to see again the extraordinary fairy-tale, picture-book loveliness of the intense blue of the prune plums hanging secretly in the deep green of the leaves. An enticing and surprising mixture of blue and green reminding of the extravagant colours in the feathers of some exotic bird. The bloom on these small, vividly-coloured plums gives the impression of a delicate mist hovering about the trees.

HIGHER UP THE SLOPE HERE, where there is no orchard, there is the bush. The bush grows quickly across a fire-break if it is not freshly ploughed every year. From up here I can look all the way down and across the shallow ravine to a horse stud. I used to call it the Tolstoy country because, across there, they have hayfields and a long paddock fenced with round poles for horses. I like to watch the horses running and not have to worry about the things they can have wrong with them.

The most lovely wildflowers, in their season, appear unexpectedly up here in this part of the bush. I won't list them all as in a catalogue or as in some footage for a film on Western Australia. It is enough to mention the red and green kangaroo paws, at their best when the sun shines through them, and the china-blue leschenaultia, the strong but fragile blue like the clear blue of the eyes of a white goose. There are flowers as if enamelled on the prickly undergrowth, some in clusters and some in wreaths, and this last year the surprise of some delicate orchids in the hollow of the burned-out tree where the fire-break turns and the descent begins.

TO FOLLOW the fence is to discover where it has been damaged, either pressed down from above or humped up from underneath by kangaroos making their way down to the dam.

To take this walk is to reflect upon time passing and on time standing still. There are places in the bush which seem as if there has been no change over a great many years. The constant changing of the seasons is a relentless movement of time, and the silence seems to make the pause. In the still silence and the great heat of summer, in this remote place, it is easy to forget where you came from, where you are going and, in a moment of remembering, to wonder why you are here at all. There is too the strange hope, at times, that out of the hot dry fragrance and the stillness some wisdom will come. This hope during the walk, over the years, has not faded.

The way down on this far side of the bush is rougher and often there are fallen branches on the fire-break. I try to move a branch but it has embedded itself in the hard ground. It has fallen from a great height. Branches fall, not in a gale as would be expected, but during the stillness of a very hot day like this day. The leaves of the eucalypts fall all the year round. The fresh green new leaves often glow with a sort of golden red colour and this makes them look as if they are made of a very thin, beaten metal.

It is on the way down that the unwanted thoughts of inability rise to the surface. Walking is a time for thinking. It is as Hamlet says: *For there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so* . . . . A fallen branch too heavy to move and the memory, the thought, which is accompanying the walk is the realisation of the ways in which, after tremendous hopes and activity, life in the little cottage and in the orchard seems to have come to a standstill. In the cottage there are a dozen or more Christmas cards all from Mr Morton, curling up, crammed along the kitchen mantelpiece; on the walls are a series of calendars, one year after another, with pictures of poultry feed and farm machinery. There is a heap of out-of-date telephone directories; there are newspapers lining cupboards and shelves with dates too far back for clean-

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liness, all with pages of impossibly cheap "specials". In the orchard several trees have not had nets put over them, others have not been pruned and yet others have reverted. The place is a paradise for parrots and crows. There are rats in the shed. I have put rat poison in the sprawl of rosemary round the poultry pens . . . .

From this part of the fire-break I can look down to the dam. To have this ugly dam the Winter Nelis pears had to be sacrificed. Well, not a sacrifice really, that is just a way of complaining. The Winter Nelis, the trees (small sweet russet pears), travelling from South Australia had to be fumigated and the white ants, finding moribund roots, were soon inside every tree. The Winter Nelis were simply an unsuccessful part of the dream.

INSTEAD OF KEEPING to the fire-break there is a wild place which can be crossed. It is rough and suggests the wilderness. *There is a path which no fowl knoweth and which the vulture's eye hath not seen.* It is here that I remember Mrs Morton's speech of welcome on the day, all those years ago, when I took possession and wandered across the warm fragrant earth hardly daring to step one step after another, not believing that land could really belong to anyone. Mrs Morton, appearing suddenly, said the rabbits would eat everything I tried to grow. She went on with frightening fire-talk, snake-talk, dried-up-creek-talk, dead-calf and still-born-lamb-talk, poison-weed-killing-sheep-talk, crows stealing eggs, salt in the ground and in the water. All the same I planted tomatoes and seed potatoes, melons and pumpkins. Of course Mrs Morton knew what she was talking about. She was even correct about kangaroos not eating sweet corn but liking to roll in it so that the whole crop could be crushed in one night.

From this wild place there is a track through to the poultry pens. I shall not gather up the dead rats. I have discovered that, in the heat, they disappear quickly. It is here that I think of the word Islam, a foreign word to me. I did not know what the word meant but I understand now that the word means to resign oneself, to submit to something which is greater, is beyond oneself. To bring the wider philosophical belief down to a tiny scratched-out place where I am walking, the submission can be applied to egg-stealing rats and snakes, to a heap of wood which should have been stacked, to a broken old chair propped against a collapsing shed, to the passion vines and the honeysuckle which, growing wild and entangled, have wrapped round the bamboo.

There is a staircase here for the fox. The fox—a vixen, I feel sure—will have climbed up here using the vine as a sort of ladder. The goose-pen fence is smothered in the flowers of the passion vine. The vixen, it must have been a vixen who, leaving her cubs briefly, bit off the heads of all the geese. She, in her raid, took all the goslings and the unhatched eggs, undermining the nests with her industrious digging. This morning the gander stood perplexed in the unnatural silence. All round him the geese lay in a wide semi-circle, their white feathered wings and bodies spread like ballet dancers in formal attitudes of contrition pressed to the ground. Their stage had no proscenium and there was, for their finale, no music. A fox hunts alone like this and this one probably made her visit, single-mouthed, in the moonlight shortly before dawn.

Resignation is powerful but perhaps optimism is the stronger power. Can a person be both resigned and submissive and an optimist as well? I think so. I have already arranged to buy some more geese later on today to start the flock once more.

The gander, unslaughtered, left out by some vixenish oversight, calls out occasionally and holds himself in an alert position, very still, waiting for the once familiar reply. It is clear he has lost his sense of direction and has no idea where to go. He has lost the goose path.

This morning early, in that uncanny silence which seemed to hang over the land in the wake of the dead geese, I burned them all. The cremation used all the dry firewood and the kindling stored for next winter. And a great deal of precious water had to be poured to prevent the funeral pyre from being another kind of fire. And now I stop during the walk and begin, too late, the work of searching out the thick coils of the vines. I spoil the pruning knife hacking at these fleshy ropes. The giant reeds (bamboo) in places are strangled and dead, and have to be cut and broken off and dragged out. It is a terrible tangled mass, this staircase for the fox. The long leaves rustle, sounding like a stream running in a place where water never flows. This is one of the deceitful things like the unhurried whispering of human voices as the wind moves through certain parts of the bush in places where there are no people. Perhaps these sounds belong to mysterious rites taking place in these small hollows of the land some centuries earlier.

IT HAS BEEN SAID *that poetry that sings of "the enshrined past" cannot answer the demands of the new age.* It feels a little bit like this to walk in the bush being deeply attached to something which has existed for a timeless time and at the same time to have to plough up parts of it and to cut other parts of it away. The passion vine is not really a part of the bush, it has been brought here. Some of it must be cut away. It curls snake-like round boots and it springs into the small of the back as if to fell an intruder. It gives the uncanny feeling that someone, not a friend, is hidden close by.

To pause and to look down and across the varying light and shade, down and across the slope of the land, is to see each time, with a fresh clarity, the different

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shades of green from the translucent pearl green to a deep purple green. To stand in this place at a certain time of the afternoon is to feel the slight change in the air, the *feeling* of the air. Sometimes the gulley winds race in from the east and at other times there is a west wind with its caressing coolness. Thinking about this place when I am not able to be here brings a consolation. Perhaps Thomas Mann felt this same sense of solace when he wrote about the misty edges of the blue green sea at that magic place, Travemünde. The solace and the consolation can never be entirely pure. The magic is often injected with the tincture of human suffering and anxiety. Travemünde, the place for youthful joy and freedom, has its row of old men worrying whether they will be able to rid themselves satisfactorily of the food eaten the previous day . . . .

Like a novel, a certain kind of novel, which is a storehouse of observation and experience, thought and feeling, this walk becomes a meditation on human wishes. This meditation is a part of imaginative creation and, to me, is necessary for living and for writing. During the walk the realisation of this, like a prayer against despair, outweighs any sense of inability and failure.

> *". . . The whole secret of following these incipient paths . . . lay in the development of the sense of touch in the feet, which comes with years of night ramblings in little trodden spots. To a walker practised in such places a difference between impact on maiden herbage, and on the crippled stalks of a slight footway, is perceptible through the thickest boot or shoe."*

THE GOOSE PATH. It is about the width of one boot. The thin bleached grass is pressed lightly down between the stretches of tall pale grass. When I first saw this tiny track I could not think who could have made it. It is made by the firm flat treading of geese, one goose following one after another, single file, in a long line as they make their way across the meadow at the bottom of the slope to the dam.

To go on with the walk I take the heavy-handled rake and, holding it out horizontally with the shadow of it over the perplexed gander, I walk him down the winding path, down the slope between the orchard trees to the meadow. It is here that he will need to be guided on to the goose path. (An aside: cows and geese walk downhill when they are not sure of the way. To find lost cows and geese it is best to go as far downhill as possible before beginning the search.)

The gander, under the shadow of the rake handle, sets off along the goose path in the direction of the dam. Carefully placing one booted foot after the other, I follow him on the fragile path. The walk here must be serene and unhurried.

The apple trees and the pears and quince are down here. The clay soil of the meadow is salt and is flooded in winter. It is a good thing for pears to have their feet in water sometimes and these trees can tolerate a fair amount of salt. Early in the morning and again at the end of the afternoon flocks of rosy-breasted pink and grey parrots fly across here. At other times the screaming black cockatoos swoop and pause and fly on in their marauding search. Just now it is quiet and in the silence the crows cry loneliness along the narrow valley.

The gander, in the shadow of the rake handle, walks obediently, placing one sensitive foot in front of the other. His clear blue eyes seem to take in the familiar surroundings. If I remove the shadow of the rake he pauses and does not know which way to go. I guide him on towards the dam. Further down the meadow the creek bed is dry except for one or two oily pools. It was always the custom for the geese to pause and sample this water which lies in the cracks of the clay. The goose path has, for this purpose, a well-defined loop which we follow before making for the final straight track which climbs the white clay slopes of the dam wall.

I watch the gander take to the water. He slides in silently and moves as if without any effort out across the unrippled surface. A few slowly widening rings spread round his gliding movement. I walk round the edge of the dam as if to encourage him but instead of diving and flapping his wings, beating them hard on the water, showing himself off as he has been doing before when courting one or more of the geese, he simply makes for the far side and clambers out. He stands on the slope just above the water and makes no attempt to preen his feathers. No sound comes from him. As a rule his voice is the kind of cello with organ-like qualities in the full orchestration of the flock. The geese use their voices like instruments in a well-trained orchestra and without them he seems to have no voice.

It is clear that when the new geese arrive I shall have to help the gander to lead them to the goose path. Perhaps for a few times and then he will lead his small new flock himself. First he will have to wait till they have done gossiping and whispering among themselves. They will preen themselves, pirouetting, stretching out first one leg and then the other. They will taste the water, drinking daintily from the bowls in the goose pen. His flock will be small for the whole year, for geese only lay eggs and nest at a particular time. Meanwhile the never-ending walk must end here for me. The fox's staircase must be demolished before nightfall. After her hunt the golden eyes of the vixen will be bright still and cunning. They hold in their glassiness a knowledge of things not understood but which have to be forgiven. It is as though the ways of the vixen, her energy, her swift stealthy movements, her thoughts and her freedom are still sewn into the tangled vines of her staircase. She is ancient and thin from her nightly expeditions and she will never lie on the creamy neck and plump shoulders of a concert-going woman. Her rough red-gold pelt will not be stroked lovingly by a child allowed to dress up, fondling the

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pretty but useless little feet of the fox fur lovingly, in her mother's finery before being sent to bed . . . .

The unmistakable perfume, the scent of fox, hangs in the silence. It is heavy and aromatic, recalling something predatory and womanly with the rich overpowering sweetness of an older charm, an experienced passion accompanying the strength and the determination of the ageing huntress.

I guide the gander back along the goose path. He walks delicately and is unhurried, perplexed still. I keep the shadow of the rake above him and under this protection he continues up the slope between the fruit trees and across to the goose pen.

I have written "I" throughout. This land in the bush with its tiny area scraped and conquered for cultivation does not belong entirely to me. It belongs to both of us. While writing I found it difficult to say "we". It is because of a certain smugness contained in the pronoun "we". I once visited some people who kept on, "*We* do this", "*We* have this", "*We* like it this way", "*We* like it here"—it seemed to me to be an impregnable wall of we and us. "I" seems more vulnerable and so is more in keeping with how I feel in the bush. I work alone in the orchard and I walk alone in the bush. I am temporary here and vulnerable and in this must speak only for myself.

## Burial Sentences

How wrong to come to Cambo
and not see you. But there it was, irrationally—
you were away. Even the piece of new
furniture in the chancel—
a thick and portable
six-sided table,
invisible apparently
to everyone but me—
had nothing to do with you.

The family faces gathered,
as long and thin and pale as yours, but brightening
to see each other. I wondered as we sang
if you could hear
wherever you were—
not in the varnished box,
perhaps outside with the far-seeing rooks
in the nest higher than the church—
the individual voices twining
such heavy strands of hymns, and recognise
the tones reluctant and deformed by sadness.

We sat to listen to the Book
of books, the comforter,
the old harmonious patchwork.
*The Lord upholdeth all that fall,*
*and raiseth up all those that be bowed down*
it would have said:
but we were given
the honest modern flour and water
and not the baked immortal bread
half-tasting of the Psalmist's oven.

How I would love to argue with you still
about the strength of words!
Your son read beautifully then,
calling you Pauline, as one soul
of another that has started heavenwards
to the simplicity from which we are fallen.

So did we all, I thought,
call you by that first name,
even perhaps the men and women
who saw you as a magistrate
and heard you utter the "fair sentences"
the preacher sought to praise:
beyond all titles still you were the same.

At last the voice of earth, the northern voice,
began: "Now lettest thou thy servant
depart in peace"—
and in the perfume of these ancient sounds
your light and folded garment,
shut in its wooden reliquary,
passed down the aisle, out of the breath of friends,
into the cold of January.

Under the sky Northumberland waits. Across
a field you knew by heart a young red horse
came galloping to see the earth receive
the measure of earth, the precious peck
of dust hidden away from sun and wind.
On the sharp drystone wall it leaned
its quizzical sorrel head, looking as you might look
on our casting crowns of flowers in your grave.

*Alistair Elliot*

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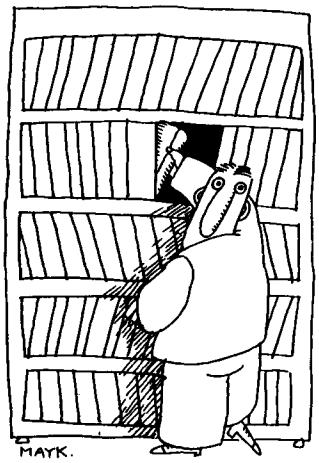
# *Sidney Hook*

# Is Teaching "Western Culture" Racist or Sexist?

## *Letter from Stanford*




THE HUMANITIES have been part and sometimes the whole of the curriculum of institutions of higher education since antiquity. They embraced the scientific disciplines of the classical and medieval world. The impact of modern experimental science and technology, resulting in the multiplication and greater specialisation of scientific studies, dwarfed the place of the humanities both by their novelty and by the revolutionary consequences of science on the life of society. But they did not eliminate the humanities even when higher education became central for professional and vocational preparation. When higher education was the monopoly of a small leisure class, the very question of its bearing on how one earned one's living seemed irrelevant and vulgar. When higher education became universally accessible, however, such questions became inescapable. Even so, although scanted, the humanities remained a part of the curriculum distinguished from the rest by its subject matter, and justified by its significance.

During the 1960s—the last great crisis in American and West European education—the university as an institution came under political attack, but not its curriculum. The irony is that by the '60s the US movement towards the *depoliticisation* of the university, in consequence of the labours of the American Association of University Professors, the academic guild founded by John Dewey and Arthur O. Lovejoy, had largely succeeded. It had become, so to speak, the common law of the academy that the university was not to penalise faculty members or students for exercising their rights as citizens, that the university was not to make allegiance to "Capitalism", or to any other social or political ideology, a condition for membership in the academic community. Individual members of the university as *citizens* could be partisan but the university as a corporate body could not. During the 1960s, highly militant bodies of students demanded that the university as a corporate body take stands on issues that had arisen in the general community which fell within the province of representative legislative bodies. The abolition of "required courses" was part of the fall-out of the crisis of the '60s, but within the last decade most of those requirements have been restored.

THE CURRENT CRISIS of education in the United States may legitimately be characterised as an attempt to politicalise the curriculum itself. Those who have provoked it contend that the existing curriculum in the humanities is already politicalised, in virtue of the fact that its basic texts have been composed by Western white males and that, in consequence, the required courses are intrinsically infected with racism, sexism, and imperialism. The remedy proposed for this deplorable situation is that the traditional texts be partly replaced and supplemented by books composed by women and people of colour and by representatives of the oppressed masses and classes of the past and present, and further, that the study of foreign cultures "in depth" be introduced into required study. To ensure that these texts be properly taught, it is urged that additional personnel of instruction wherever possible be recruited from minorities and women, especially if there is any doubt about the willingness or capacity of existing faculties to do so.

This "transformation" or "revision" (call it what you will) has been carried out at Stanford University, and has been criticised in some educational circles as a politicising of a curriculum designed for other purposes. Such criticism has

THIS *is the last manuscript Sidney Hook wrote, and, in a long life-time of arguments and polemics (gently recorded in his recent autobiography, "Out of Step", 1987), it is characteristic that his final piece of writing should concern the liberal university, its critical mission and cultural duties. When we telephoned to his home in California to say that the article had arrived and would shortly be published, he had already been taken to the Stanford hospital. He died on 12 July at the age of 86. He was one of* ENCOUNTER*'s most regular contributors, dating back to the first number in 1953; and we will be returning in subsequent articles to an appreciation of his life (which was the soul of intellectual integrity) and an evaluation of his career (as the pre-eminent philosopher of democratic freedom). We record his passing with deep regret and sorrow.*
*M.J.L.*



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provoked the rejoinder from the architects of the new curriculum that the criticism is itself politically oriented, indeed is an expression of the same "repressive politics" embodied in the canonic texts of the course in Western culture. Even before these developments (in a report to Congress on *The Humanities in America*), Lynn Cheney, the present head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, had deplored the fact that, in the teaching of the Humanities on every level and not only in required curricular courses:

> ". . . viewing humanities texts as though they were primarily political documents is the most noticeable trend in academic study of the humanities today. Truth and beauty and excellence are regarded as irrelevant; questions of aesthetic and intellectual quality dismissed. . . ."

Her report has been subjected to a strong criticism (by a committee of six scholars) as itself a political document.

I am going to devote my main analysis to the concept of "the political" in this discussion, and to the hard-and-fast way its different connotations are being employed to obfuscate the issues. Before doing this I wish to state a few assumptions, which I am prepared to defend if challenged, that relate to the humanities curriculum in our educational enterprise.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE, or assume, that what differentiates the disciplines in the humanities, as they are understood today, from other disciplines is their central concern with human values, their interconnection and imaginative representation in human experience. We acknowledge the desirability of including a broadly based course in the humanities as a curricular *requirement*, to provide all students with the legacy of their culture through the study of the outstanding books, ideas, movements, and creative personalities that have contributed to it, and with an understanding of the conflicting cultural traditions of the past that have shaped the present, and affected our current difficulties and tensions. The materials in such study have provided us in part with the basic categories of our thought and language: the conceptual tools, sentiments and dispositions with which we approach the central problems of reflective life, whatever our geography or region. We acknowledge that such study for many reasons cannot constitute the whole of the school's curriculum, that at most it will be confined to one year, preferably at the outset of the students' careers before specialisation begins. We acknowledge that there cannot be in a decentralised educational system such as ours only one programme, however ideal, or one set of syllabi for a course of this character, whatever it is called; that the diversification will reflect local resources, capacities, and opportunities. Finally, we acknowledge that whatever texts are selected for a course of this character, they are not eternally fixed, they can be varied from time to time, reflecting available talents and shifting interests without affecting the over-all goal of providing for students from all backgrounds a unitary, but not uniform, educational experience whose existence can be built on whatever educational and vocational differentiation follows.

THE FIRST POINT I want to make, on the basis of a survey of courses in "Western Culture" (or Civilisation) more or less like that offered at Stanford, is that, despite what its detractors have claimed, it is *not* a glorification of the *status quo*. On the contrary. It gives an understanding of how the *status quo* has come into being, presents some of the revolutionary ideas that helped it emerge, and explores the struggle and debate among the great maps of personal and social salvation whose promises and dangers still engage our interest. As a matter of fact, it is from a curriculum of similar studies in Paris or London that some leaders of Third World countries absorbed the ideas and ideals they used to rally their peoples against colonisation. And in truth, since the standard texts express conflicting ideals, they could hardly lend themselves coherently to any one point of view. But their grasp and analysis is required by anyone who seeks intelligently to transform or to conserve our society. Whether it is the ideals of tolerance, the limitations of ethnocentrism, the visions of Utopia without which Wilde said no map of the world is complete, all are contained in every well-tailored course in the humanities. Any intelligent student completing such a course, if and when he acquaints himself with other cultures, can hardly help concluding that of all cultures of which we have any record, Western culture has been the most critical of itself, that its history has largely been a succession of heresies, and that it has been freer of the blind spots of ethnocentrism than any other.

As to the charge that courses in Western culture have been racist, sexist, and imperialistic, in the negative sense of these terms, despite every renewed request for evidence no one has ever cited *specific* evidence that any of the basic texts has been systematically taught in the spirit and attitude of invidious discrimination that these terms currently have. There was certainly no evidence of this in any of the tracks of the course at Stanford (although, like all university courses, they invited improvement). Of course, in discussing Greek drama we cannot but become aware of how different the status of women was in the classical world from what it is in our own. But we would be guilty of the grossest distortion of scholarship if we denied the fact. Effective teaching can take one of its points of exploration from it whether we are reading *Medea* or discussing the startling feminist views in Plato's *Republic*. Indeed Plato's *Republic* in the hands of a good teacher lends itself to the exciting counterposition of arguments and themes on a whole variety of subjects that possess contemporary vibrancy, e.g. the recurrent temptations of censorship, the defects of democracy, and the snares of totalitarianism. Nor should we forget for a moment that no text imposes one reading on all interpreters of its meaning.

AT THIS POINT I am likely to be told that the absence of women and people of colour among the authors of the basic texts is evidence of the inherent bias with which such courses are infected. Where is the imaginative presentation of the life of the common people, the spear-carriers, the hewers-of-wood and drawers-of-water, of the victimisation of women from Biblical days, of the mute and inglorious lives of slaves, especially the black slaves? The texts of courses in Western

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culture, it is asserted, were written by élite members of Western society for the élite—and therefore slight the contributions of women and minority groups, without whom there would be no culture at all. . . .

The naivety of the complaint reflects the intensity of the political commitment of those who level it, not their historical judgment. Of course the culture of the past was created by the élite members of the past! Who else could have created it at a time when literacy itself was the monopoly of the élite classes? It was that creation winnowed by the criticism of successive élites that produced our culture.

And the quality of that creation is not affected by its origins. It was none other than Karl Marx himself, steeped to his very pores in the élite classical culture of the West, who declared that although Greek art and epics are products of a class society, "they still constitute a source of aesthetic enjoyment and in certain respects prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment. . . ." He was not exalting or looking for a proletarian or slave art that did not exist, but wanted to make the best of art and culture developed in every society part of the cultural birthright of the working classes. To be sure, we may be curious to know how, and why, the masses and women were excluded from the creative cultural institutions of the past, why they were confined to the kitchens and work-places and denied the light of learning. These are legitimate questions explored in a wide variety of other courses in sociology, politics, economic history, and anthropology, open to inquiring student minds. But to introduce all of these studies into a course in the *humanities* is to dilute it into a very thin soup of social smatter.

THE NOTION that the course in Western culture can be enriched by adding, to its core-list of readings, books by women and persons of colour, not because they are the best or most appropriate for the subject in hand but because of the race, or sex, or class, of the author—a kind of "affirmative action" programme in bibliography—is both patronising and ludicrous from the standpoint of honest scholarship. And it compounds the folly when tacked on to this is a mandate to recruit from "women and people of colour" the teachers of the ideas and aspects of culture that involve them. This is nothing more than a sophisticated revival of the old "folk" fantasy—and just as absurd—that only like can understand like. Does one have to be French to study or understand Napoleon, Russian to understand Lenin, Greek to read Homer or enjoy the figures of Praxiteles? As well argue that men cannot be good gynaecologists, that only women with children can best understand and administer family law, that only fat physicians can study obesity, and hungry ones the physiology of starvation as to assert or imply that only people of colour or women are uniquely qualified to do justice, wherever relevant, to the place, achievements, and oppressions of minorities and their culture. Was it not the work of a white male and, to boot, a foreigner, a Swede, who in *The American Dilemma* first moved the conscience of America in recent times on the race question more than any other person before the appearance of Martin Luther King?

There is only one genuine educational question broached by the situation in Stanford that unfortunately had little to do with the actual decision made there but which has occasionally been asked and discussed elsewhere. Granted that Western culture is now operating in a world of global issues enveloping the entire world, should the required basic course we have been proposing be taught as "World Culture" or "World Civilisation" rather than as "Western Culture" or "Civilisation"? If so, its core reading-list would have to contain the great works of different peoples and cultures, the kind of literature, art, and history that denizens of these foreign cultures have been nurtured in. But could that be done in an educationally fruitful way?

There are many reasons to doubt this. A great work that has exercised its influence in a culture is approached with a mind-set that, in part, has been determined by the influence of that work in the culture. The Japanese student reading *The Tale of the Genji,* the Chinese student reading Confucius's *Analects,* the Pakistani student reading the *Qur'ān,* or the Hindi the *Bhagavad-gita,* has a knowledge of its symbols and world view that is certainly not beyond the grasp or comprehension of the American or West European student but which manifestly would take him years to acquire. He hasn't the same background with which he approaches the Gospels or even Shakespeare. He cannot unmake himself and grow into these other cultures as he did in his own. The sphere of future activity will primarily be his own culture. So although he can contrast and compare the way the Golden Rule is formulated positively and negatively in Rabbi Hillel, the New Testament, Buddha, and Lao Tze, it cannot serve in any formulation as a key to the whole culture without the student knowing much more than even his teachers are likely to know. The point of building "bridges of understanding" to other cultures is to prepare students for the encounter of visiting them and imaginatively empathising with them, not to live in them. Whatever the global future will be, it is not likely to result in a homogenous global culture. There will not be one "global village" but a plurality of global villages.

OBVIOUSLY, the study and history of humanities in the West touches the borders of other cultures. But it is the humanists themselves in pursuit of their teaching and research tasks who know what is to be studied, and when. The motivation of those who legislated that concerns for "Race, Sex and Class" be made central in the study of the humanities at Stanford and elsewhere was not pedagogical but political. It was stated, often explicitly, that justice or fairness required that the needs of the exploited, oppressed, and hitherto unheard be recognised, that their voices be amplified, and their separateness overcome. All are worthy objectives of an enlightened political agenda. But however desirable this agenda is, its sphere of activity is the public and legislative forum, not the curriculum of the humanities. In the study of the humanities, we can legitimately inquire into the influence of political decisions in the past on the ideals and models conceived to represent the best and most enduring in art and literature. But that is quite different from selecting readings in a course, or teach-

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# *Ibn Batuta & Sitars . . . Columbus & the Piano*

THE PUSH TO RID **American education of what critics say is a Western and European bias is beginning to change the way history, literature and the arts are being taught from grade school through graduate school.**

**While some school systems are revising courses and some authors are rewriting their textbooks, many professors and classroom teachers feel uncomfortable about the pressure for change.**

> **"We know how to put things in the Western tradition in context [said Richard Rorty, a professor of humanities at the University of Virginia who is a prominent philosopher]. But most of us don't have the slightest idea what the contexts of Indian music, Japanese poetry and Indian philosophy are. The trouble is knowing how to teach it so you have anything useful to say about it to students."**

STILL, THE CALIFORNIA *public school system, the country's largest, has adopted a new History curriculum that will teach students about civilizations of India, China and Africa as well as Greece and Rome.*

*Public school systems in California and elsewhere have bought textbooks that give increased emphasis to studies of non-Western cultures. At the college level, Bowdoin College in Maine now requires freshmen and sophomores to take two courses in non-Western studies.*

THE DEBATE **swirling around these changes is crystallized in a word: "Eurocentrism". While its definition often depends on the political view of the definer, "Eurocentrism" generally describes a provincial outlook that focuses overwhelmingly on European and Western culture while giving short shrift to Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The term is usually used pejoratively, equating it with "élitism".**

**"Eurocentrism" has become one of the most compelling topics in current intellectual and educational discourse. The debate goes beyond the recent disputes that changed the content of the Western civilization course at Stanford University.**

CRITICS SAY *American universities and grade and high schools are Eurocentric not only because of the writers and philosophers they feature but because they deal with non-Western civilization only through a Western lens.*

*These critics argue that only a Eurocentric viewpoint would say Columbus "discovered" America, as if there had been no other people on the continent. Only Eurocentric history teachers would treat Japan, China and India not in their own right but in terms of wars or other encounters they have had with European nations and the United States.*

*African art is primitive only to a Eurocentric eye. European music is classical only to a Eurocentric ear. Why are Western religions treated seriously and those of other peoples looked down upon as superstitions? Why are American children taught about the Venetian traveler Marco Polo, but rarely about Ibn Batuta, a 14th-century Muslim who visited India, Sumatra and the Niger River as well as Marco Polo's China?*

MANY EDUCATORS AGREE **that the critique of "Eurocentrism" has some validity, but many feel that it has been carried too far. They say accusations of "Eurocentrism" have become voguish pejoratives being used not just to foist often dubious changes on the curriculum but also as a springboard to catapult minority and immigrant professors into faculty positions and to provide them with topics to write about.**

**"It's being used as a weapon by the Cultural Left", said Professor Rorty. "As usual, I think the Left is shoving us in the right direction, but some of the ways they go about it are sort of silly."**

**Diane Ravitch (a professor of Education and History at Teachers College of Columbia University, who co-wrote the California curriculum) said many educators believed that the curriculum still gave primary emphasis to such traditional topics as Ancient Greece, Magna Carta, the Renaissance, and the writings of Locke, Rousseau and Montesquieu, because "if you reduce Europe to a land mass like Africa or Asia, then you forget about Europe as the seedbed of democratic institutions."**

THOSE WHO DISAGREE *with the Eurocentrism critique charge that the debate is really more about power than about the best way to educate people.*

*The "Eurocentrism" critique, detractors argue, is rather long on indignation but short on suggestions of what non-European writers, philosophers and artists might replace the European ones. There are few Americans who can teach authoritatively about China and India and few people with a sensibility dexterous enough to fully savor Chinese and Japanese poems, then explain them to Western students.*

*Elizabeth Coleman, president of Bennington College, sees a danger in succumbing easily to the lure of the critique. Too often, she said, texts can be treated "as if they're a reflection of culture, time and place, and the extent to which they have autonomy gets lost." She added, "Faulkner didn't write as a Western writer—he wrote as Faulkner."*

*Chester E. Finn Jr., an assistant Education Secretary in the Reagan Presidency, cautions that although the argument that American children do not know enough about the rest of the world is valid, it should not turn "into an argument for children to learn less about Western civilization or modern European history."*

*The issue crackles wherever intellectuals come together. Last week, the Presidents of Bennington, Amherst and Williams, and Columbia College gathered in Manhattan to discuss what should constitute "a liberal education". The weekend before there was a panel discussion at the annual Socialist Scholars Conference in New York entitled "Eurocentrism: Imperialism of the Mind".*

CRITICISMS OF **Eurocentrism abound, but concrete remedies are few.**

> **"There's a tremendous amount of undigested emotion behind the term [said E. D. Hirsch, a professor of English at the University of Virginia]. The culture that determined where we were going was pretty well established on these shores in 1776 and it all came from Western Europe."**

**Echoing this observation, Mr Finn said:**

> **"Anyone living in a Western culture has greater need of knowing the corpus of violin music than sitar music."**

*Joseph Berger*
*in* THE NEW YORK TIMES

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ing them, in order to reshape the politics of the present or the future.

This immediately brings the retort that refusal to orient a course in the humanities politically is itself to take a political position. The refusal to "take a stand", it is averred, is itself a political stand. And so, if we are not careful to make and abide by the proper distinctions, the question of whether, and to what extent, a work of art or literature exhibits a political aspect——the answer to which, if we know it, is yes or no—is transformed into whether or not our decision to study a subject and to stress this-or-that aspect of its work, becomes a *political* question . . . and the answer to this depends on whether you are liberal or conservative, a reformer or a revolutionary.

Let me meet this position head on. Is it true that the refusal to take a stand is itself a political stand? No, unless we are dealing with an explicit political problem, where the consequences of not taking a stand (say, proclaiming neutrality between aggressor and victim) have political consequences affecting everyone. But outside the sphere of partisan political issues, the refusal to take a stand on a disputed issue may mean nothing more than a decision to suspend judgment until more evidence is in.

If I refuse to come down on one side or the other of the question of whether Francis Bacon or the Earl of Essex wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare, or whether whoever wrote the play *Hamlet* portrayed Hamlet as genuinely mad or feigning madness or Polonius as a figure of fun or as genuinely a sage, my answer is decidedly *not* political in any ordinary sense of the term. It may be that, in the light of overwhelming or preponderant evidence, my continued suspension of judgment could be warrantably called unscholarly; but not political.

I hear on all sides nowadays that the choice of any set of books or writings in a course in the humanities is a political choice. What makes it political? That it is a *choice*? But how arbitrary that would be! Would the choice of textbooks in a course in mathematics be political, too? Certainly not, even if the teacher were prescribing his own book because of the anticipated royalties instead of one clearly better. In that case, his choice is not political but unethical and unprofessional.

It certainly would be odd if anyone characterised the choice of musical works to be studied in a course on musical appreciation as "political". There could be all sorts of differences among the architects of such a course—or of any course in the humanities—about the justification for including each or any item. But unless one can show (and not merely assert) that there was a political reason for the selection, it is a plain abuse of what Charles Peirce called "the ethics of words" to call the choice "political".

Why, then, comes the renewed complaint, are there no books by women, or workers, or people of colour in the canon of the standard humanities courses? Does not that express a value-judgment? To which the manifest answer is: Yes, it does express a value-judgment—but *not* a political value-judgment—about women, workers, and minorities, and their place in our culture. It is a judgment about which books have had the greatest influence on the culture of our times; which books have been the sources of renewed delight, intellectual stimulation, and challenge to their readers; which works of literature and art help us best understand our own contemporary culture, which is related in thousands of ways to the cultural achievements of the past.

POLITICAL PASSION still sustains the argument. Do not the standards of excellence themselves, the criticisms of judgment, even the so-called "eternal values", "reflect" the social and class structure of the time. The word "reflects" is one of the most ambiguous terms in the voca-

## *"Barbarians Are in Our Midst"*

OUTRAGED BY *what they see as the "radicalization" of courses, hiring policies and academic standards at American universities, a group of 300 American scholars has begun what it calls a movement to reclaim the academy.*

*The group, the National Association of Scholars, met over the weekend at a conference at the Roosevelt Hotel in Manhattan and shared war stories of what they suggest is a revolutionary transformation of university life.*

*Many complaints of the group's generally conservative members were featured in Allan Bloom's best-selling book "The Closing of the American Mind" and in other forums. But the scholars' fervor has reached such a pitch that they have borrowed a tactic of the opposition by organizing themselves.*

*Indeed, the remarks of speakers sounded more like calls to battle than the measured evaluations of a scholar, and the applause they received was more typical of a political rally than of an academic conference.*

**"The barbarians are in our midst. We need to fight them a good long time. Show them you are not afraid, they crumble."**

*The chief complaint expressed at the conference was that political objectives, many of them flowing from affirmative-action programs for women and members of minority groups, had contaminated what scholars said was the objectivity on decisions about curriculum, promotion, and academic discourse.*

*Senior scholars have seen American universities transformed by the ascent of teachers and administrators whose political views were shaped as students in the 1960s.*

*Dr Stephen H. Balch, president of the association, said that the group would try*

**". . . to redeem American higher education from intellectual and moral servitude to forces having little to do with the life of the mind or the transmission of knowledge."**

*Joseph Berger*
*in* THE NEW YORK TIMES

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bulary of criticism. If a writer or artist accepts the society of his time his values "reflect" it; if he rejects the society, his action and values necessarily reflect it by this very negation. The question for scholarship is *how* do his values specifically reflect it? And the question whether his or her work is to be included in the canon of the humanities is not whether it reflects *its* society, as in some way it necessarily does, but whether it has something to say of abiding significance to other times and other societies as well. We don't have to use the rhetoric of "eternal values" to make the point that whatever makes a claim to eternal value must establish its validity as an enduring value here-and-now. Of course, since all things have a history, values have a history too, and all we can ever mean by intrinsic, perennial, or eternal value is that a book, painting or musical composition that embodies it *still works its attractive power on us today,* regardless of our political partisanship.

WHAT IS basically objectionable in the contemporary movement to politicise the humanities is that it conflates different meanings of the term "political". It goes from a sense of "political" synonymous with a basic choice in any field so broad that it lacks an intelligible opposite—so that to be is to be political—to a sense of the term "political" in its transparent, conventional sense. In order to conceal that fact, and its relation to its overt political antecedents in the 1960s as well as its political stance on the current scene, those who hold this view fall back on the comprehensive, confusing usage of the term "political" as meaning any choice. Sometimes the exemplars of the movement frankly proclaim that they want to reform the humanities programme *in order* to shape the political future of the nation. But *logically* these goals have nothing to do with each other. One can be for, or against, the Equal Rights Amendment or the Welfare State, regardless of the sex or colour of the authors of the books studied. At this point the question, they seem to imply, is one of power, not logic. The situation is accurately characterised by Richard Rorty, who although critical is not himself unsympathetic to some of the social goals of this movement.

> "A new American cultural left has come into being [Rorty writes in a recent essay], made of deconstructionists, new historicists, people in gender studies, ethnic studies, media studies, a few left-over Marxists, and so on. This left would like to use the English, French and Comparative Literature departments of the universities as staging-areas for political action . . . ."[1]

A more representative (and in a sense, official) view is expressed by Professor Linda K. Kerber, recent President of the American Studies Association:

> "We have celebrated the speed with which we have discovered diversity—of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. But for all the skepticism, irony, and critical perspectives upon which we pride ourselves, we have remained too much part of the *status quo* we deplore.
>
> Freed from the defensive constraints of cold-war ideology, empowered by our new sensitivity to the distinctions of race, class and gender, we are ready to begin to understand difference as a series of power relationships involving domination and subordination, and to use our understanding of power relations to reconceptualise both our interpretation and our teaching of American culture. . . ."[2]

Associated with this view and outlook is an attitude which gives me profound concern because it challenges the very notion of objective truth on the ground that the quest for truth is itself affected by interests which are ultimately tied up with the class structure of society. Accused of reading its own political bias into the interpretation of and evaluation of events to further the indoctrination of their students, members of the new New Left respond that their critics are themselves biased—that "objectivity" exists in the eye of the beholder, since no one is free from bias.

It is not difficut to show that such a position is incoherent, flawed by its own assertions. It is true that no one can claim to have, or to know, the whole truth about anything; but it by no means follows from this that all assertions are equally true or false, that we cannot ground some statements on the basis of evidence, as better or truer than others. Indeed, to hold that objectivity is a myth is tantamount to denying the distinction between fiction and history, or between guilt and innocence in relation to the admitted evidence.

One can safely predict that, if such modes of thinking take over in the humanities, before long we will be hearing their echoes in medicine and the natural sciences too. It was a mere 30 years ago that we were hearing about "Aryan" and "Jewish" physics and "proletarian" biology. Today once more there is talk of Race, Gender, and Class, not as subjects of scientific study but as characterising the scientific approach.

Nonsense, the literate reader will say. To be sure, but if unchecked, we have learned, such nonsense can kill.

---

[1] Richard Rorty, "General Education and Socialization", an address delivered at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia on 1 March 1989.

[2] Linda K. Kerber, in *Chronicle of Higher Education,* 29 March 1989.

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*Hugh Macpherson*

# Any Other Business

We went there for a meeting—
one of those sessions that
are both nuisance and relaxation:
after the paperwork, the vindication
—of supposed skill, hard work,
the sort of thing we all say
we believe in. And on expensive
hotel balconies, watching sun set
over dockland grown misty and romantic,
swimming pool a chilly waste of water
for red reflection, we saw what
we really wanted: the world calm
and a place for ourselves in it.
A tiny shunting engine whistled
under stars, and smoke drifted
in cigarette rings over the moon.
Next day's work dragged on.
I listened for the clang of trucks:
smoke signalled above the head
of the chairman, suddenly grateful
for our attention. On the drive back
steam rhythm and whistle counterpointed
constantly in my head. Asked about results,
absentmindedly I replied "Fine, and there was
a steam engine too." The boss guffawed:
challenged, the sounds vanished
from my ears. But months later,
speaking of the place, he was still saying
to puzzled visitors: "You know,
the one with the engine."

# A Marine Archaeology

Waves shuffle on the shoreline,
wind stirs the foam again,
and we shiver. Gallipoli is
on the coast across the strait,
burned by bush fires until as bare
as in photographs of the trenches
and huddled soldiers. Troy is further,
down this same road—we can hardly see
a skyline without a name or configuration
reminding us of presence. And
throughout our early morning return
by airports and tube stations, the waves
there still murmur mnemonics, still unfurl
as we settle on pillows while our own
travels sink deeper into ooze of memory.
Under the surface the war ships lurk still,
edges roughened by rust and vegetation,
events that lie just out of access
by the eye, and return the more strongly,
rising at the name of a hill town
or the sound of slow surf on beaches
abandoned by the day to day.

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# Scope for Development

It's last century's part of town,
built for expansion from crowded centres—with
balustrades and Greek urns on skylines above
gardens planted with groves self-conscious with learning.
As plant collectors struggled through China and Tibet,
rhododendrons appeared in shrubberies, and anxious owners
tried to fit a full synopsis of the world into
back borders inspired by a classical concept of order,
where new poppies bloomed with "meconopsis'
labelled round each tidy stem.

Planting has turned out just as they dreamed.
Each garden has its shaded contemplative walk.
Lime leaf and chestnut mingle. Now we cut them down:
with prices as they stand no one can afford
to be sentimental, it seems, with land.
A dark cumulus of copper beech comes down
in a thunder of demolition. Only clouds stay the same,
lingering as though the familiar might yet struggle back
from rubble. A lamp-post lights in a solitary red stamen
where sad, suicidal moths drift in scattered pollen.

*John Greening*

# King John Crosses the Wellstream

Dysentery was our only chance.
So long as he had to keep dismounting

for a squat, we'd not lose track of him,
although the Fens kept trying

to draw a mist between us as we were hauling
his baggage-train from King's Lynn

through Wisbech towards the Wellstream.
But then, at the Estuary, the air

became as clear as that cut topaz
Pope Innocent gave to him, and at once

we knew that his sickness had lifted
along with the autumnal murk.

He breathed, looked north, and
said not a word (not even: were

his treasures all secure, his crosses,
his cups, his pearl-studded knife?) and

cracking another raw egg, beckoned
us on into the landscape's open mouth.

We heard the quicksand smacking its lips,
and the tide-rip's slobber; but he

was away off on the scent of cider,
swallowing his eggs whole, like a skua-gull.

Of the one hundred and forty-three cups
of white silver we have now emptied

into the darkening Wash, of the gold plates,
and of the crowns that have sunk like flat-fish,

had he observed but one, or seen us attack
the thick cords binding his precious collection

of baths, valuing only—among the emeralds
and sapphires of the advancing tide—

a few more seconds gained, and up to our waists
and feeling the rear axle lurch,

had he but noticed our desperate tableau,
these fingers clutching the setting

shafts of his last pageant-cart,
and felt not hunger, not parricidal anger . . . .

But King John is in Swineshead now, exultant
no doubt, and panting praises at his

deliverance from the gut-ache, enjoying
a ripe peach, the first of the new cider,

assuming that one of his servants will be on hand
to bring him the crown jewels to finger,

and his favourite bath, with kingly quantities
of healing water from the Wellstream.

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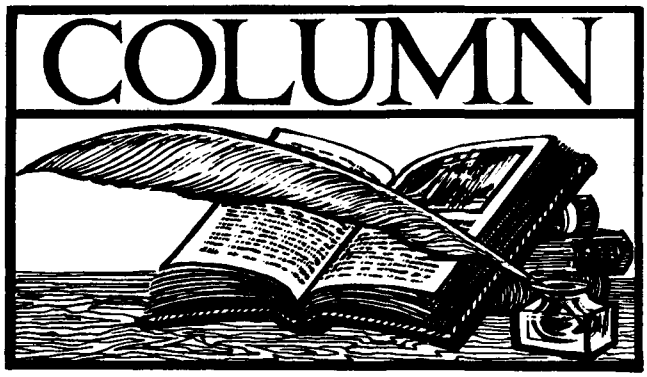


"NEW! Exciting! Different! FREE!" All good words to sell things with—even if the truth is "Old! Boring! Identical! PAID FOR BY INFLATING THE PRICE!" But most people nowadays apply similar private glossaries to the claims of advertisements and menus. "Country" = Factory. "Farm-fresh" = Battery. "For the discriminating" = Mass-produced. "Low-calorie" = Artificially sweetened. "Mother's" = Our multinational's. "Natural" = Synthetic. "Scientists tell us" = We tell you.

Growing resistance to such verbal hype is partly due, in Britain, to the Consumers' Association and its magazine *Which?* I remember the sense of liberation and zest with which I read the first issues. Here, after years of puffery, sometimes in newspapers' "New Gadgets" columns, was a cool objective voice, reporting scientific tests and price comparisons, factual and dispassionate but not mincing words. "There is no evidence that *His'n'Hirsute Shampoo* prevents or delays baldness." "The unit price of the Giant Family Economy Pack of *Slurp* is marginally higher than that of the regular size." "Our advice is: ignore *Ivory Smile* and buy the cheapest toothpaste whose flavour you like."

The novelty of those early days has of course worn off a little. The products tested are more complex; choosing a single Best Buy is sometimes impossible; the reader must work harder to sort out priorities and decide which factors—looks, safety, cheapness, etc.—weigh heaviest with him or her. Yet, even in today's more elaborate *Which?* magazine, alongside the lobbying for Government action and the case-histories of readers' quests for compensation, there are still nuggets of sheer joy when the Consumers' Association exposes a fraud.

"Fraud", come to think of it, is another good word to sell things with: newspapers. So is "fake"; so is "scandal"; so is "cover-up". All four were used, in various places, by Dr Oliver Gillie, then Medical Correspondent of *The Sunday Times*, when from 1976 onwards he published articles accusing the late Sir Cyril Burt, a founding father of British psychology, of having been a liar and a cheat.

The indictment was startling. Born in 1883, educated at Christ's Hospital, at Jesus College, Oxford, and at Würzburg University, Burt had been one of the pioneers of psychological testing, working at Oxford, Liverpool, and Cambridge before becoming Psychologist to the London County Council's Education Department from 1913 to 1932. From 1924 to 1931 he was also Professor of Education at the University of London, and from 1931 to 1950 Professor of Psychology at University College, London. His key publications had included *The Distribution of Educational Abilities* (1917), *The Young Delinquent* (1925), *The Backward Child* (1937), and *The Causes and Treatment of Backwardness* (1952). He had been heaped with honours. Knighted in 1946, he had received the Thorndike Award from the American Psychological Association in 1971. When he died later that year aged 88, Professor Leslie Hearnshaw of Liverpool University gave a moving address at his memorial service, calling him "a man of rich humanity and outstanding gifts, whose achievements in the field of psychology will be remembered for many years to come. . . . His reputation was world-wide. No man has done more to shape the profession of psychology as we know it today in this land. . . . As long as psychology remains a subject of scientific inquiry he will live in its halls of fame."

The posthumous charges against him, supported by some professionals, led to ferocious controversy. The ferocity was due not only to suspicion of Burt, animus against him, or admiration for him, but also to the contentious nature of some of his published findings. These seemed to show that intelligence, like physical stature, was largely inherited. Unsurprising, perhaps; but deeply upsetting to those who believed, often passionately, that nurture, not nature, was the main determinant, and that intelligence could be socially engineered. The debate was especially heartfelt in the 1950s in Britain, when educationists were divided about the respective merits of selective and non-selective education. If children's mental ability, as Burt largely concluded, owed much to genetics, there might be a case for dividing the intellectual sheep from the goats at or after the age of 11, as was done in the UK until the abolition of the "11 plus" exam. The conclusion did not necessarily follow the premise: it might equally be argued that less gifted children should be given a "head start", as tried in the United States—or that they might improve by contact with the more able, in "unstreamed" classes within "comprehensive" schools. But logic, hypotheses, and experiments to validate them, were rare in the ideological debate; and Burt did nothing to appease any champion of non-selective education when he lent his authority to its opponents by printing an article in their *Black Paper II* (1969). If one of the chief believers in innate inequality turned out to be a charlatan, some egalitarians could rejoice.

PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS remained divided on Burt's guilt or innocence for several years after the original accusations. Then, in 1979, his official biography appeared.[1] Its author was none other than Leslie Hearnshaw, whose memorial address had so affected Burt's surviving sister that she had asked him to undertake the work. To her, it must have been a shock and a disappointment. Some of the charges of fraud Hearnshaw dismissed: but he accepted others, and added to them. In February 1980, his conclusions were publicly endorsed by the Council of the British Psychological Society, and generally backed two months later at the Society's annual conference. Even Professor

[1] L. S. Hearnshaw, *Cyril Burt: Psychologist*. (Hodder & Stoughton, 1979).



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H. J. Eysenck, who initially had defended Burt in *The Times*, in the *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society*, and in ENCOUNTER,[2] came round to regarding him as guilty. Now, only a handful of professionals, mostly former colleagues, still resisted the prevailing opinion. For everyone else, including those of the public who followed such matters, Sir Cyril Burt's name was mud.

It was an appalling human tragedy. Hearnshaw sought to explain it by suggesting that Burt's very first schooling, in the East End of London before his doctor father moved to the country, had given him streetwise urchin ("*gamin*") instincts, which surfaced in his later years, tempting him to fake his test results to suit his hereditarian principles. Others maintained that Burt had been dishonest from the start. Whatever the theory—and whatever the rights or wrongs of the nature-versus-nurture debate—it was deeply depressing to think that a man who had seemed a great scholar should have been shown up as a sham.

WELL, TAKE HEART. I have just been reading a book whose intellectual rigour, scrupulous fairness, and probing of false claims are as exhilarating and refreshing as reading those early issues of *Which?* This is *The Burt Affair*, by Robert B. Joynson.[3] It proves, to my satisfaction at least, that the case against Burt is as full of holes as a colander. Some of the charges, on investigation, turn out to be quite untrue. Others are open to innocent explanation. The worst that can be said with any certainty is that Burt, a pioneer, used rough-and-ready procedures (as he admitted) and sometimes failed to explain himself. And the motives of some of his accusers seem as dubious as some of their methods. Strong language—which Joynson's magisterial study carefully avoids. But I now have no doubt that if some of Burt's critics had published their attacks on his integrity while he was still alive, he could have won substantial damages for libel in any court of law.

No summary could do justice to the meticulous care with which Joynson tweezers out fact from falsehood, accuracy from allegation, verisimilitude from venom. He never overstates his case, because he has no case to state. His aim from the beginning was to investigate; and his interest in the affair was aroused almost by chance. Studying the origins of intelligence testing as part of the history of psychology, he read Hearnshaw's biography of Burt, and was puzzled. He may, as he says, "fairly claim to have been unbiased at the outset":

> "But it should be added that it is extremely hard to remain so. If examination of the evidence suggests that Burt was guilty, it is easy to become incensed by his behaviour. If it suggests that he was innocent, one may become enraged by the behaviour of others. In addition, one becomes committed to one's own interpretations, and blind to evidence which undermines them. Nobody can guarantee that they will remain without prejudice throughout the inquiry. The reader's only defence is constant vigilance."

Joynson maintains this cautious punctilio throughout his investigation. He turns first to the charge that Burt overplayed his own early contribution to factor analysis and simple summation, and belittled those of C. E. Spearman and Karl Pearson. Here, checking the record, Joynson concludes that Burt's biographer Hearnshaw "has misunderstood Burt's account".

> "The errors in Hearnshaw's account are so frequent and widespread that they are highly likely to be discovered by anyone who sets out to check, wherever they begin their enquiry. . . . It follows that few if any of those who have publicly accepted Hearnshaw's conclusion, whether in reviews and articles, or in other public statements and decisions, can have made any real attempt to verify his case."

The second and more substantial of the allegations against Burt concerns his publication of kinship data. Here, the heart of the matter is the comparison of the respective IQs of monozygotic ("identical") twins brought up apart from each other. If one is reared, say, in a "deprived" environment with little intellectual stimulation, poorly educated, and even physically oppressed, while the other enjoys every opposite opportunity; if, none the less, both show very similar intelligence quotients; and if, finally and crucially, this

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[2] H. J. Eysenck, "The Case of Sir Cyril Burt", in ENCOUNTER, January 1977, pp. 79-91. See also "The Detractors" by John Cohen, ENCOUNTER, May 1977.

[3] *The Burt Affair*. By ROBERT B. JOYNSON. Routledge, £25.00.

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phenomenon recurs in the great majority of a large enough number of instances—then, with due precaution, it may be suggested that heredity has won out over environment.

This, indeed, was Burt's broad conclusion. Naturally enough, it was not easy to find large numbers of monozygotic twins reared apart; and he seems to have collected data over a period of years. What he failed to do, it would appear, was to correct the coefficients derived from his first trawl of twin numbers as new cases were added to the total. It may have been, as Joynson conjectures, that some of the figures were temporarily mislaid in the crowded chaos of his apartment, ill-organised by an otherwise devoted secretary. It may have been that others were lost in wartime moves. Whatever the reason, Burt republished the coefficients unaltered, despite the extra cases he said he now had. These "invariant coefficients" led his critics to impugn his honesty and allege that the "extra cases" were invented, and that the two ladies who he claimed had helped him compile fresh data, Miss Howard and Miss Conway, were invented too.

No one, Joynson admits, can be certain of the facts here: but the balance of plausibility lies with Burt. A deliberate deceiver, inventing new data, would surely have altered the coefficients accordingly: Burt did not. He may have assumed that his procedure was obvious, and not bothered to explain. Nor can he be convicted on the mere absence of evidence—the fact that Miss Howard and Miss Conway are not mentioned in his diary, and that neither answered an advertisement in *The Times* in 1976. By that time, they would have been elderly, might have died, and may well have read another newspaper. In fact, a research student, who was himself a twin, shortly afterwards recalled having been tested by a Miss Howard, working with Burt in conjunction with "another woman whose name I knew began with 'C'". That, surely, would have made an Old Bailey jury sit up.

A number of lesser charges are even less convincing. One, advanced by two of Burt's most persistent accusers, is that he published in the learned journal he edited, the *British Journal of Statistical Psychology*, articles over their bylines "implicitly attacking Eysenck". Joynson, who unlike the accusers makes clear that he has looked up the records, has no difficulty in showing that the so-called articles were two out of three items under the heading "Summaries of research theses"; that the summaries were accurate; that in both cases they played down the contrast with Eysenck's findings; and that one of them did not mention him at all.

As well as smears, distortions, inaccuracies, and inadequacies, the campaign against Burt—as it seems fair to call it, though Joynson does not—presents other disturbing features. One is the role played by the Council of the British Psychological Society after the publication of Hearnshaw's biography of Burt. In the years in question, two of Burt's main accusers were successively Vice-President, President-Elect, President, and Vice-President. In February 1980, the Monthly Report in the Society's *Bulletin* announced the decisions reached by the Council at its meeting in the previous October, only three months after the appearance of Hearnshaw's book. After listing the main charges against Burt, the Report went on to speak of "the evidence of fraud before it", "the impact of Burt's falsifications", "Burt's deceptions", and "Burt's fraud". It also recorded that the Council had asked the third of Burt's main accusers (herself married to the second) to "consider the feasibility of establishing whether there were any further misdemeanours to which attention should be drawn". All this with no attempt to verify whether the "evidence" (the Hearnshaw biography) would withstand detailed scrutiny. Guilty as charged, m'lud: no need to hear the defence.

GRACE-NOTES in this disgraceful story include the political affiliations of Burt's main accusers: Left-of-centre, to say the least. But that, of course, should never matter. The whole point should have been to establish empirical bases on which to form a judgment—not only about Burt himself, but about the subjects to which he had devoted a lifetime. Agreed, IQ tests are fallible instruments, even now. Agreed, Burt's methodology in those early days was far from the standards now to be expected. Agreed, he may have been a contentious figure, with very clear prejudices of his own. Agreed, he like everyone must have made mistakes. But if one suspects bad science, the remedy is good science—not bad science pointing the opposite way. In this respect at least, research should not copy the confrontational procedure of a British court of law.[4]

What, then, of the central issue—nature versus nurture? The phrase makes a good slogan; but, as suggested above, it may be of little use in helping educators give all their pupils the best possible chance. In his admirable Preface, Joynson puts it in a nutshell:

> "In order to avoid misunderstanding, my position on the question of the relative importance of heredity and environment should be stated. It is similar to that recently expressed by Bouchard and McGue (1981). After reviewing 111 separate studies, giving 526 IQ correlations drawn from some 55,000 pairings of relatives, they conclude that IQ has both a genetic and an environmental component, in proportions unknown."

Forget the rival advertisements, in fact. In this case, there is no Best Buy.

*M*

[4] Journalism, unfortunately, does. *The Independent* of 4 August 1989, carried a review of Dr Joynson's book which faced none of its detailed findings, and simply assumed Burt's guilt from the start.

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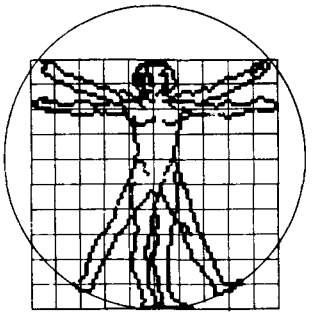
# A Loose Wheel Spinning

## *Sherrington's Man—By T. D. ROGERS*



"FEW THINGS", wrote Bertrand Russell, "are more firmly established in popular philosophy than the distinction between mind and matter. Those who are not professional metaphysicians are willing to confess that they do not know what mind actually is or how matter is constituted, but they remain convinced that there is an impassable gulf between the two and that both belong to what actually exists in the world."[1] This historic dichotomy remains as fixed in the popular imagination as ever, despite the earnest endeavours of philosophers and physiologists to bridge the gulf. Next year will see the 50th anniversary of the publication of Sir Charles Sherrington's classic text, *Man on his Nature*,[2] a work which represents a highpoint of 20th-century scientific writing—and arguably the single most important assault on Cartesian dualism.

In his 1937-38 Gifford lectures at Edinburgh University, which had provided much of the material for his book, Sherrington had stated the problem in new terms:

> "These two concepts (energy and mind) divide, and between them comprise, our world. How can the phenomena of the two (space-time energy and non-space mind) interact? The more the biologist studies life the less I fancy does it seem to him like life to have a loose wheel spinning. Yet how shall a spatial wheel cog into unextended mechanism or the non-spatial drive a spatial wheel?"

In the course of answering this ancient riddle, Sherrington paints a vivid picture of the human brain—"an enchanted loom where millions of flashing shuttles weave a dissolving pattern". But he goes much further than a mere description (albeit graphic) of the brain's hardware; he anticipates the general thrust of neurobiology and evolutionary theory over the subsequent half-century.

Sherrington makes explicit in a way never before attempted, and seldom since, the full implications of a materialist biology:

> "Science tells man that he is a product of nature. Broadly taken, he is a product of his planet and its sun. Even his mind which would seem most to differentiate him is of the natural world. Its origins trace thence; its climax confirms its origins. They give each other meaning, even as lock and key. . . . Man is nature's beginning to be self-conscious."

The past 50 years have provided the evidence which Sherrington lacked to support his adventurous thesis.

WHAT IS LIFE? Biologists probably find this harder to answer now than did their predecessors of 200 years ago, when, despite the absence of a unifying theory of biology, at least there was no doubt as to what was "alive" and what was not. Living things appeared to be imbued with a mysterious "Life Force" or "Vital Spirit" which, though hard to define, was easy to identify. Modern developments in organic chemistry and molecular biology have gradually eroded the barrier separating the physical sciences from the so-called "life sciences". The "Vital Spirit" has been snuffed out by the cold water of science.

> "A speck of material which is said to 'live', while the vast majority of specks of material are said to be lifeless? Has it some particular element of matter in it which those other specks have not? No; that is not the key. The elements of matter in the living cell are among the very commonest of those spread broadcast in material which does not 'live', in soil, rock, air and water. . . .
>
> The difference is not one of ultimate nature but of scheme and degree of complexity. 'Living' becomes a name for certain complexes of them, arrangements of which it may be said that they are organized integratively, i.e. to form a solidarity, an individual."

In a classic experiment in the 1950s, the American researcher Stanley Miller showed that a wide variety of amino-acids could be synthesised in the laboratory. Miller attempted to reproduce the conditions of the so-called "primeval soup" as accurately as possible in specially constructed flasks. He then subjected this rich broth to ultraviolet light and electric sparks, simulating electric storms and

[1] Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Mind* (1921).
[2] Charles Sherrington, *Man on his Nature* (1940, second ed., Cambridge University Press, 1951; still available).



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unfiltered sunlight. The results demonstrated that complex organic compounds could be produced out of simple substances in conditions similar to those on the earth's surface three to four billion years ago. More recently, Juan Oro and A. P. Kimball found that the building blocks of DNA could be produced by a similar process.

The emergence of such complex chemicals from the primeval soup seems fairly easy to accept. Much harder, for most of us, is the notion that these substances "evolved" by the action of physical forces on chemical composition, to produce the abundance of living things we now see. This is a conceptual leap that we find difficult to make. To Sherrington, however, the idea is far from preposterous.

> "There was a stage in the dark backward and abysm of time when our planet's side was not as yet a place possible for the life now around us. A stage ensued, however, when things would by a bare margin just permit the type of energy-system we speak of as living. Slender though that chance, it was, so to say, seized. Life appeared. Perhaps in some small runnel of tidal mud or frothy ooze. . . . Mere mechanism and yet charged with germinating reason."

Recent authors have been more audacious than Sherrington. The Oxford physical chemist Peter Atkins, for example, has stated that life becomes inevitable once the appropriate conditions occur. In his view, the action of sun, wind and sea on the chemistry of the primeval soup will lead to "biology"; and this isn't just probable, it is inescapable.

OUT OF THE MELTING POT, then, comes DNA, a substance with the remarkable ability of replicating itself. The primeval soup becomes populated with copies of DNA, some of which are more stable than others. Robust copies survive, while fragile ones disintegrate. Random transcription errors occur, most of which are disadvantageous but some of which improve the chances of survival of the replicators carrying them. Errors conferring an advantage become more numerous in the gene pool, and over aeons life becomes increasingly varied and increasingly complex.

What is the purpose of it all? There is none. "Life's story has been the unfolding of germinal powers of the planet." Life erupts out of a chemical sea simply because physical conditions allow (demand?) it. Once life exists, the application of the laws of physics seems somehow more sinister. What appears innocuous when applied to soap-bubbles or salt-crystals seems savage when applied to song-birds.

> "It was a strange misapprehension on the part of Rousseau that the native state of Nature is a peace. Nature in the primeval African forest as observed by a naturalist of today is found to present an appearance 'sinister, hostile and horrible'. . . . Nature contains much which is hateful and much of pain. Much that 'spoils the singing of the nightingale'."

The concept of a struggle for existence had been central to biological theory since Darwin chanced upon the writings of Thomas Malthus in 1838. Actually the struggle for existence is more metaphorical than literal, and manifests itself in mathematical trends rather than physical combat. Put simply, it means that successful organisms will endure, and their offspring will be more numerous, while less successful organisms will become scarce. Traits which enhance the ability to survive will be inherited to a greater extent than traits which do not.

TO DARWIN and his immediate successors, the struggle had been between species, or at least between individual organisms. With the advent of a mathematical analysis of population genetics, the idea arose that evolution could be regarded as a change taking place within the "gene pool" of a species. The modern view has been summed up by E. O. Wilson in his *Sociobiology* (1975):

> "In a Darwinist sense the oganism does not live for itself. Its primary function is not even to reproduce other organisms; it reproduces genes, and it serves as their temporary carrier. Each organism generated by sexual reproduction is a unique, accidental subset of all the genes constituting the species. Natural selection is the process whereby certain genes gain representation in the following generations superior to that of other genes located at the same chromosome positions. . . . But the individual organism is only their vehicle, part of an elaborate device to preserve and spread them with the least possible biochemical perturbation. Samuel Butler's famous aphorism that the chicken is just the egg's way of making another egg has been modernised: the organism is just DNA's way of making more DNA."

Richard Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene* (1976) is perhaps the ultimate expression of this line of thought. Dawkins argues that bodies are the wrong level of evolutionary analysis and that all evolution is nothing but a struggle amongst genes. This is really a strict version of Darwinism in which all features are seen as adaptations, and bodies are just temporary containers for their selfish genes.

Many have raised the objection that this view of evolution is teleological. Dawkins is accused of attributing to genes characteristics that they clearly cannot have, such as selfishness, ruthlessness, and an ability to plan ahead and direct the course of evolution. This charge is based on a misconception. Dawkins repeatedly makes his true position known, and he warns against linguistic shortcuts:

> "Natural selection favours replicators which are good at building survival machines, genes which are skilled in the art of controlling embryonic development. In this, the replicators are no more conscious or purposeful than they ever were. Genes have no foresight. They do not plan ahead. Genes just are, some genes more so than others, and that is all there is to it. . . .
>
> If we allow ourselves the licence of talking about genes as if they had conscious aims, always reassuring ourselves that we could translate our sloppy language back into respectable terms if we wanted to, we can ask the question, what is a single selfish gene trying to do? It is trying to get more numerous in the gene pool."

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In the struggle for survival, organisms equipped with the ability to solve life's problems will tend to be more successful than those lacking such equipment. Genes coding for problem-solving abilities will become more numerous, and behavioural repertoires will become more complex. Thus, in retrospect, evolution appears to have "favoured" the development of intelligence. This retrospective judgment, though, should not be equated with a purpose in nature. Intelligence has evolved because it has been advantageous in local conditions at specific times. Like life itself, it is the product of "a contingent past, not the inevitable and predictable result of simple, timeless laws of nature".[3]

ON THE SURFACE, the Sherringtonian view of the evolution of mind has a passing resemblance to the poetic vision of Bergson or Teilhard de Chardin, in which evolution is the fundamental motion of the entire universe, a striving onwards and upwards towards consciousness. Teilhard, in particular, saw in noogenesis direct proof that evolution had a direction, and that that direction was towards cerebralisation. To the modern biologist too, the outstanding feature in the phylogenetic development of the nervous system is the cerebralisation of function—the gradual shifting forwards of ultimate control to the forebrain, a process reaching its greatest complexity in man. But to the biologist, that process is seen as the end-product of millions of random genetic mutations, each of which has provided a significant advantage at the right time and place.

The shibboleth which most acutely distinguishes the Sherringtonian view of mind from that of Bergson or Teilhard, however, is the concept of falsifiability. Science proceeds by generating and testing hypotheses. That which is not falsifiable is not science. Sherrington's image of mind erupting out of a chemical sea appeals to the voluptuary, mystical streak in all of us, but it does more than that. Sherrington constructed a model of the mind which is logically consistent, which is informed by a vigorous, ambitious and robust general theory—Darwin's theory of natural selection—and which is, at least in principle, falsifiable.

We can divide this explanation of mind into a "proximate cause" and an "ultimate cause". The ultimate cause of mind is natural selection. The proximate cause is the activity of the brain. Mind is the inevitable pouring forth of experience which results from the normal working of the intact human brain. It is this aspect of Sherrington's work which has received most support from recent research. Psychophysiology, that hybrid branch of science that seeks physiological correlates of psychological events, has made huge inroads into this "inner space" in the past ten years. The brain's notorious inaccessibility, encased in a rigid skull far from the probings of the experimenter, has now been circumvented by the ingenuity of the electronic engineer. New techniques of brain imaging allow the correlation between brain and mind to be mapped out in a way which was inconceivable to Sherrington or his predecessors. Dynamic studies of brain function allow the psychophysiologist to assert more confidently than ever that mind is a function of brain.

WITH REMARKABLE perspicacity, Sherrington reserves his final, and longest, chapter to a discussion of ethics and altruism. Within the past twenty years altruism has again become a source of interest within evolutionary biology; Richard Dawkins, for example, states that his *The Selfish Gene* is an examination of the biology of altruism and selfishness. But while most professional biologists have been content to address the question "How did altruism arise?", Sherrington was more concerned with the problem of "What can we do with it?".

> "Nature is a scene of interaction, and between living things interaction can be co-operation or conflict. Nature exhibits such co-operation but she is burdened with conflict like a nightmare. Beauties it presents, joys it contains, but a blight of suffering infests it."

As an example of cooperation Sherrington cites "the fairylike visiting acquaintance between the planet's population of insects and its population of flowers". As an example of conflict, he describes at some length the malaria-causing parasite *plasmodium*:

> "This parasitic animal scourges with misery and death entire regions of Earth's surface which might but for it be happy places. A poet who had seen much of it called it 'million murdering', and that is true. Its life is the destroying of other lives, and it infects nearly one-third of Earth's population. It is a product of evolution. Evolution has adapted it, complexly, delicately and effectively to kill other lives."

These venomous specks, says Sherrington, are sustained at an immense cost of human suffering. But Nature recognises no lives of higher worth or of lower worth, because to her all lives are without worth:

> "Hume makes his character Philo inveigh against Nature 'pouring forth into her lap without discernment or parental care her maimed and abortive children'. But to the suggestion that Nature is immoral, today's reply is 'non-moral, not immoral'."

Man is a product of the same ghastly process. Worse, man is the product *par excellence*. He has achieved dominance because he has turned his mind to improving his defence, and defence lies mainly in attack. He has set himself deliberately to exterminate those lives which threaten his own. Now, partly emancipated from those ancient biological conditions, he has acquired "values" of right and wrong.

> "But ancient trends die hard. He himself is often still just one more agent of suffering to others. He must try to shed from his gene-complex some sub-human ingrained elements. The mill he has been through ground out its products in the main by retaining above all the interests of 'self'. He was a successful product of the process. The

[3] Stephen Jay Gould, *The Flamingo's Smile* (Penguin, 1986).

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contradiction is that he is slowly drawing from life the inference that altruism, charity, is a duty incumbent upon thinking life. That an aim of conscious conduct must be the unselfish life."

THE HUMAN MIND is strangely placed on this planet, and excites in man a sense of loneliness. All other mind is inferior—and almost incompanionably so. Man's spirit yearns for company, and he seeks a Higher Being to meet his needs in this. But here Charles Sherrington departs from William James, the Gifford lecturer of 40 years previously. In a famous passage in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James had stated that it was impossible to find in the driftings of the cosmic atoms anything but a kind of aimless weather, doing and undoing, achieving no proper history and leaving no result. James had continued:

> "The bubbles on the foam which coats a stormy sea are floating episodes, made and unmade by the forces of the wind and water. Our private selves are like those bubbles—epiphenomena . . . their destinies weigh nothing and determine nothing in the world's irremediable currents of events."

To Sherrington, the arrival of man signalled the end of this chaos and randomness. Man has broken the code, has revealed the mystery of his own origins, and alone understands that he and nature are parts of one and the same. He has found the whole "more than a mere whirlpool motion without progress", and sees that he has been a part of its moving onwards. The ultimate achievement of humanity has been the recognition of suffering occurring external to itself, and reacting to it in such a way that that suffering becomes its own. This raises human life to a plane above other life, but, Sherrington adds, "it is in mankind an attainment not reached with broadcast equality".

To some these words may seem facile understatement, written as they were at the height of the Third *Reich*. But Sherrington is thinking of a biological time-scale, which is tantamount to a geological time-scale, not of historical time. "As the periods of the planet reckon, civilization itself is young".

> "If we accept the story behind us, the planet, which being blind never before had purpose, now is lent a purpose and—anthropism of anthropisms!—by man."

Man's discovery that he is nature become self-conscious allows him to rebel against the process which has enthroned him, and to experiment with his new-found "values" of right and wrong. The man of science, says Sherrington, is a fractional man, not a whole man, because his scope is to distinguish true from false, not right from wrong. Nevertheless, man is endowed with ethical principles and the scientist cannot escape the obligation of applying them.

> "Otherwise in a world of mishap his scientific knowledge and his ethical judgement become two idle wheels spinning without effect, whereas they have been evolved and survive each to give the other effect."

*Man on his Nature* is a paean to science, and hence a paean to the human mind and to the process which generated it. Sherrington ends by suggesting that man's next goal should be the construction of a natural religion, a system of beliefs rooted in the study of nature, but transcending this and including a system of values.

This idea is not new, and its precursors are to be found in the writings of Hobbes and in the natural philosophy of von Schelling. Sherrington, though, gives a new impetus to this world-picture, with his clear account of how man has sprung from the substance of the planet. The appeal for a moralistic rationalism has been echoed recently by Peter Medawar and Stanislav Andreski.[4] The main obstacle to the achievement of this ideal, as noted by Andreski, is that many people are temperamentally ill-adapted to the scientific world-picture, and need the emotional comforts derived from a belief in the supernatural. On the other hand, Sherrington's eloquency on the origin of mind, and on man's relationship to the planet, may contain theosophy sufficient for the most mystical amongst us.

[4] See especially ch. 7 of Peter Medawar, *The Limits of Science* (1984); Stanislav Andreski, "Religion, Science, & Morality", ENCOUNTER, May 1988.

## The Zoo Question

The eagle wouldn't acknowledge my visit,
Stared straight ahead at nothing,
Like an old man suddenly remembering
A question from twenty years before
And seeing the answer at last, a mile away.

He had a lame wing according to his label,
Sat and ignored the young people
Saying strange things to him, absorbed
By that mouse moving, twenty yards off,
A simple answer to proud desire.

*Lawrence Dugan*

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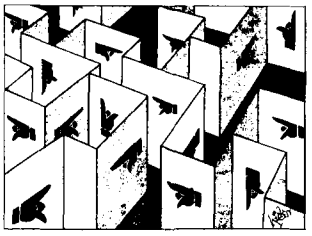
# NOTES & TOPICS

*Letter from Athens*

# Labyrinth

## *By Nigel Clive*



THE EVENTS WHICH prepared the way for the Greek elections of 18 June, and those which quickly followed in their immediate aftermath, were without precedent in recent times.

In the first place, the exceptionally long pre-electoral period stretched back to August 1988, when the Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou, had been rushed to England for a triple-bypass heart operation—accompanied by Dimitra Liani, a former Olympic Airways hostess, well shaped above the waist. She was younger than his daughter and he had been living openly with her for the past year. Margaret, his American wife to whom he had been married for over 30 years, stayed in Athens. On his return, no member of his family (not even his son, who was the Minister of Education) was there to greet him. Virility is one thing, but in Greece it does not excuse disregard of the family.

Hence the start of endless speculation as to whether Papandreou would be fit enough, in every sense, to lead PASOK (the Panhellenic Socialist Movement) through a third electoral test after the spectacular 1981 victory, which brought Greece its first Socialist administration, and the second success in 1985 with a slightly reduced majority. In the autumn of last year it was already an open question whether PASOK's original electoral slogan, "*Allaghi*" ("Change")—such an understandable vote-winner in 1981, after seven years of military dictatorship and seven more of Right-wing governments—was not going to backfire. Moreover, the Prime Minister's long absence in England had revealed early signs of disunity in the PASOK government. It had been pulling in different directions, proving that it was only his personal domination that had solidified the fourteen government reshuffles of his Prime Ministership. Had his grip slackened? Could he reassert authoritarian control?

Then came the revelations of an unprecedented financial scandal, revolving round the young Greek banker George Koskotas who had vaulted to prominence in 1984 as the multi-millionaire owner of the Bank of Crete, and had surrounded himself with aides recruited from PASOK. Last October, investigations began into the financial dealings of the Bank. Koskotas was charged with embezzling some 210 million dollars, most of it siphoned from the bank accounts of state-owned corporations; he was also accused of forging American bank documents. In November, although ostensibly under watch day and night, he escaped from Greece in a private jet, emerging in Rio da Janeiro where the plane was quickly spotted by Greek journalists. It later landed him in Boston, and there he was arrested by the FBI.

Koskotas's sudden disappearance from Greece caused the immediate resignation of the Minister of Public Order. There followed a string of denunciations from both the conservative *Nea Dimokratia* and *KKE*, the Greek Communist Party, each of which fixed the blame "at the top of the pyramid" and especially on Agamemnon Koutsoyorgas, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice, who was Papandreou's personal friend.

The subsequent call for *Katharsis* or clean-up (it was to become the keynote during and after the June elections) brought together all the opposition parties as well as respected former PASOK Ministers. Papandreou was forced to agree to a parliamentary commission of enquiry. On 7 December 1988, the Governor of the Bank of Greece informed this Commission that two senior Ministers had tried to prevent him from ordering an audit of the Bank of Crete. His evidence directly implicated Koutsoyorgas, whom Papandreou had switched to be Minister in charge of the Prime Minister's Office; and this in its turn led to the resignation of Papandreou's legal adviser. By mid-December, both the Minister of Defence Procurement and the Finance Under-Secretary had resigned in the wake of further disclosures of government complicity in an illicit arms trade, which had been covered up by Koutsoyorgas.

THE NEXT explosion came with *Time* magazine's cover story of 13 March 1989. It showed Koskotas behind bars, and was entitled "The Looting of Greece". "From his cell", said *Time*, "a fallen tycoon charges Papandreou with stealing millions." For Koskotas was claiming that he had deposited two million dollars to Koutsoyorgas's credit in a Swiss bank account. Papandreou, he declared, had authorised this payment, and had himself been on the payroll. Koutsoyorgas now resigned; but the Prime Minister's response was to wave away these charges as "a CIA conspiracy". Soon thereafter, both the Head of Greek Telecommunications and the Director of Olympic Airways were separately accused of illegally depositing their reserves with the Bank of Crete. By late April, four former PASOK Ministers had resigned and the Directors of four state corporations had been jailed.

A surprising defector from the Left was Mikis Theodorakis, the popular composer and former Communist deputy, who came out with a public statement that only the Right could now save Greece. And, one week before the elections, 153 academics signed an open letter protesting against the corruption of public life under PASOK. A number of its signatories would have been prepared to sue for libel anyone who dared to described them as Right-wing.

As the European liberal press, almost in concert, was ridiculing Papandreou's political antics, several foreign heads of government found convenient excuses for cancelling their



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scheduled trips to Athens. Particularly damaging to Papandreou's electoral appeal was Mikhail Gorbachov's decision not to pay a long-awaited visit—reinforced by the Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, who found more pressing engagements in Moscow. Even Fidel Castro failed to turn up. Papandreou had to make do with entertaining during the Greek Easter celebrations such minor figures as Daniel Ortega, Nicaragua's President, and later meeting the Bulgarian President, Todor Zhivkov. On both occasions (as at the European Summit in Rhodes in December 1988) Dimitra Liani was openly paraded as Papandreou's official escort—which did nothing to increase his international standing.

MEANWHILE, HOW HAD the opposition to PASOK been performing? At the 1985 elections, PASOK's share of the vote, after four years in power, fell by under 3%. Its principal rival, *Nea Dimokratia*—the party which had been founded by Constantine Karamanlis on his return in 1974 after the collapse of the military dictatorship, and since 1984 had been led by Konstantinos Mitsotakis—had increased its support by 5%. But this still left *Nea Dimokratia* almost 5% behind PASOK. Realising that he would have great difficulty in winning a third term, Papandreou tabled a Bill on 16 March 1989 which changed Greece's electoral system to a purer kind of proportional representation. His clear objective was to deny any one party an overall parliamentary majority (151 out of 300 seats) as distinct from a mere plurality. What Papandreou had in mind was the advantage that would accrue to the two Communist parties—the traditional *KKE* and the Euro-Communist Greek Left party—which together with a number of PASOK defectors had united for electoral purposes as a Left Coalition under the leadership of Harilaos Florakis of *KKE*.

Papandreou's not unreasonable calculation was that even if PASOK lost a considerable number of votes, it would still be able to cling to power with the help of the Left Coalition. In practice, however, Florakis and his Communist-dominated Left Coalition declared at the end of May, in a direct reference to the Koskotas scandals, that there was no possibility of cooperation with PASOK so long as that party remained under Papandreou's leadership: "A proposed democratic government cannot include persons implicated in financial scandals in terms of either personal or political responsibility."

By early June, as the electoral campaigns of the three main groupings—PASOK, *Nea Dimokratia*, and the Left Coalition—got under way, Papandreou's famed charisma showed signs of fading and PASOK appeared as a populist, rather than a modern socialist movement. Yet he could still count on a bedrock of support in the countryside, which accounts for some 27% of the Greek work-force. Ironically, he had the European Community (from which in the past he had threatened to withdraw, using the slogan: "The EEC and NATO are the same syndicate") to thank for the guaranteed prices and subsidies for farm products that were bringing him the farmers' votes. PASOK also had the huge advantage of total control over the administrative machinery of government; in particular, the Radio and Television Service which angled the news in PASOK's favour. Although opinion polls gave Mitsotakis's *Nea Dimokratia* the advantage, his comparative lack of magnetism seemed unlikely to produce a sufficiently large swing to give an overall parliamentary majority under the new voting system. Despite ugly incidents, there was much less violence than had been expected while the party leaders were stumping the countryside, and in the final week before the elections, successive monster rallies of *Nea Dimokratia* and PASOK passed off peacefully in the centre of Athens.

When the first election results started to come through, late on the night of 18 June, the early returns showed *Nea Dimokratia* in the lead—which caused noisy rejoicing by its supporters. They had not reckoned with the drawbacks of the new electoral system, which in the end produced the hung Parliament that had been confidently predicted by a number of well-informed observers. A total of 25 parties contested the election, but the final count showed the monopoly of the three main groupings, with *Nea Dimokratia* gaining 2,858,727 votes, 44.2% of the poll, and 145 seats; PASOK 2,527,465 votes, 39.14%, and 125 seats; and the Left Coalition 845,500 votes, 13.19%, and 28 seats. The Right-wing splinter group "Democratic Renewal" and an independent Muslim candidate in western Thrace each scored one seat. *Nea Dimokratia* was thus six seats short of a Parliamentary majority.[1]

THE GREEK PRESIDENT, Christos Sartzetakis, faced with political deadlock, turned first to Mitsotakis—giving him an exploratory mandate to investigate the chances of *Nea Dimokratia* securing a vote of confidence in the new Parliament. But when Mitsotakis offered the Left Coalition two key ministries in a government under his leadership, the offer was refused by Harilaos Florakis, and Mitsotakis had to report failure. The situation was further complicated when Papandreou was rushed to the General State Hospital with severe heart and kidney complications. It was on his sick bed that Papandreou in his turn received Sartzetakis's exploratory mandate, which he failed to exploit to PASOK's advantage, since Florakis kept his word. The Left Coalition would not cooperate in a government led by either Mitsotakis or Papandreou.

This left President Sartzetakis on 27 June with no alternative but to offer Florakis himself a mandate to form a government—the first ever secured by a Western European Communist leader. Florakis favoured "a broadly based consensus government under a neutral Prime Minister", but it seemed unlikely that this handsome formula could be converted into political reality. It was therefore a welcome surprise to everyone except Papandreou when Mitsotakis step-

[1] As a secondary, almost tertiary event, which drew no public interest whatever, voting also took place on 18 June in the Euro-elections. Against the trend elsewhere in Europe, where votes in the main went to the Left, *Nea Dimokratia* secured ten seats in the European Parliament with 42% of the vote, against PASOK's nine seats with just under 35% of the vote, while the Left Coalition lost one of its four seats.

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ped aside, astutely proposing that the new Prime Minister should be Tzannis Tzannetakis, a back-bencher from the liberal wing of *Nea Dimokratia*, and a former submarine commander who had a record of heroic resistance to the 1967-74 military dictatorship.

On 30 June, Florakis agreed to negotiate with Tzannetakis and on 2 July an interim government of "National Reconciliation" was formed with Tzannetakis as Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, but with two nominees from the Left Coalition in the key posts of Interior and Justice. It had a three month term of office, and *katharsis* was to be its first priority. Most of the other Ministers came from the Centre Right wing and from the younger generation of *Nea Dimokratia*. Fotis Kouvelis, a Euro-Communist and President of the Athens Bar Association, will be responsible as Minister of Justice for overseeing the judicial processes of *katharsis*, while the main task of Nikos Konstantopoulos, the Minister of Interior (a PASOK defector), will be to cleanse the state machine and organise the autumn elections.

This "historic compromise", involving collaboration between Left and Right, has no exact precedent in recent times. A coalition government had come to power in 1974, when the now virtually defunct Centre Union had joined Karamanlis's administration in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the military junta. But Communists had last held government posts 45 years ago when Andreas Papandreou's father led the Greek Government-in-Exile back to Athens after the Nazi withdrawal. The subsequent civil war, from 1946-49, is still vividly remembered. It led to the Communist Party being outlawed for 25 years, until Karamanlis legalised it soon after his return to power in 1974. This was the first time since 1944 that a Communist had controlled a government Ministry, and the first time one had been appointed as the result of a general election.

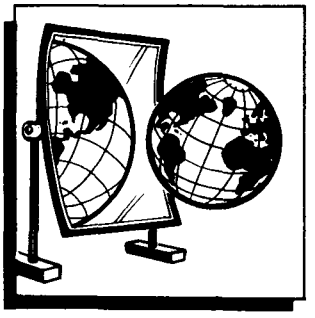
THE "UNHOLY and unprincipled alliance", as Papandreou called it, survived its initial parliamentary test on 8 July, obtaining a comfortable majority of 174 in a vote of confidence focused on governmental action required to start the process of *katharsis*. But the welcome flexibility so far shown by *Nea Dimokratia* and the Left Coalition will be badly needed—and may be hard to find—during the bumpy ride between July and the autumn election. In the field of foreign policy, there is likely to be agreement on how to handle the Cyprus problem, but the best hope of avoiding friction on the future of American bases in Greece and the extradition of Mohammed Rashid, the Palestinian terrorist, may be to freeze those sensitive and divisive issues.

The economic agenda is, however, another matter. The IMF, the OECD and the EEC, at the last European Summit in Madrid, pointed to the dangers of the growing deficit in Greece's public sector (expected to reach 14.5% of Gross National Product by the end of this year), with inflation running at over 14%, a ballooning foreign debt, and the unpopular necessity for drastic cutbacks in public expenditure. After eight years rule by PASOK, continuation in some form of the present consensus will certainly be needed if Greece is to benefit from this radically different form of *"Change"*.

*Letter from South America*

# Of Coca & Carnations

## *By Nicholas Shakespeare*



WHEN I LAST VISITED Bolivia, fourteen years ago, it was tempting still to think of Latin America's fourth largest country in terms of a "tin-pot dictatorship"—a phrase made popular again during the Falklands War. Bolivia's principal industry consisted in the mining of that metal. Its years of independence had been outnumbered by its governments, including the régime presided over by General Melgarejo—a depraved intoxicate who shot his shirt each night so all would know he trusted no one, and who, on hearing of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, ordered his army to march to the aid of France. Another charge laid at Melgarejo's door was the shooting of ex-President Belzu. Belzu's most famous pronouncement: "Bolivia is totally incapable of being governed."

It is hard to believe Bolivia's last coup took place as long ago as 1980, when the Justice Minister of General Luis Garcia Meza, the new dictator, declared on television that every Bolivian was under suspicion and should not leave home without carrying a will under their arm. Today, General Meza is in hiding. He has two charges against him: one for human rights violations (including the murder of the novelist Marcello Quiroga Santa Cruz), the other for allegedly stealing the diaries of Che Guevara and attempting to auction them in London. Meza, who disappeared while under house arrest, is rumoured to have hot-footed it to Paraguay with spectacularly bad timing—just before the coup against General Stroessner. He has now apparently scampered back, and takes out full-page advertisements in newspapers declaring that he won't come out of hiding until justice returns to Bolivia. Meanwhile his son, a jockey, continues to represent Bolivia on horseback, spurring on Julieta, a horse named after the month of his father's coup.

Much has happened since July 1980. Democracy for one thing—which the country has enjoyed since 1985. And a complete transformation of Bolivia's political and economic status. A heady mixture of Thatcher-like curbs and revenue stimulated from both foreign aid (about $550 million) and cocaine (about $500 million) has seen inflation tumble from 24,000% to 24%. To keep the office ticking over in 1985, for instance, even the British Embassy's accountant had to change money with the black-market dealers on the Avenida Camacho, carrying wads the size of brickbats. Things are

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very different today. "Things are working here which are not working in richer countries", observes Britain's Ambassador, Colum Sharkey. "It's an unusual time for Bolivia because of its stability."

Of course, Bolivia's new-found prosperity owes a significant debt to the coca leaf. To what level people have stickied their fingers in this particular honey is hard to assess, but certainly in the Chapare region one in five is dependent on cocaine and there are stories that implication goes as high as the President's wife, a matronly woman from Santa Cruz. According to our Honorary Consul there, one dealer thrown out of Santa Cruz's country club raised two of his fingers at the committee by constructing his own 18-hole golf course.

The richest *narcotraficante* of them all, Roberto Suarez, has offered to pay off Bolivia's national debt. In April last year, an explosive video showed Suarez in conversation with two senior members of the National Democratic Alliance Party (*ADN*). They were discussing how they would launder drugs money if their party were voted into power this August. Suarez is currently serving a fifteen-year sentence in a wing of Sao Pedro prison, where he enjoys freedom and conditions unlikely to be shared by other inmates. Not for Roberto Suarez the admonition in the Courtyard of Honour: "Do not piss on the lawn."

TRUE TO FORM, the extent of the cocaine industry has meant that the Americans have poked their noses into Bolivia to a degree and in a manner which most Bolivians find unacceptable—giving substance to a statement made by a La Paz hostess in the 1850s: "I believe the North Americans will some day govern the whole of South America." What is essentially a problem for American domestic policy has become a determining factor of its foreign policy in the region.

The disastrous *Operation Blast Furnace* of two years ago (involving a strong military presence and provoking the mischievous, ironic, heinous thought that cocaine is less destructive, on balance, than conventional or nuclear weapons, so why doesn't the United States contemplate a ban on arms sales) has given way to a policy aimed at appeasing Congress by offering significant reductions in cocaine production. Thus, United States aid to Bolivia (currently $74 million) is tied hand and foot to an eradication programme which shows no sign of working, still less of an understanding of problems on the ground.

For instance, Bolivia stood to forfeit $24 million of aid in April 1989, purely and simply because not enough coca had been eradicated. (Congress wants 5,000-8,000 acres destroyed a year.) Yet precious little American thought has been given to what the Bolivian peasant can put in place of a crop that grows quickly, that he has been growing since before America was a twinkle in Vespucci's eye, and that nets him 100 times more profit than anything comparable—certainly more than the carnations which one project has him cultivating for export to, of all places, Holland. As Colum Sharkey says, if you're a Bolivian peasant and you're offered $100,000 to go up a street instead of down it, you know which way to walk.

At £4-5 million, Britain's aid programme, though extremely low by comparison with other countries, is our highest in Latin America. It also appears to be more intelligently administered. "We give technical aid or materials", explains one of those responsible. "The Americans or Japanese put in lots of money, but where the cash goes no one seems to care. At least the locals know we're there for the benefit of the community. Cash just benefits the hierarchy."

WITH COLUM SHARKEY I fly down to Cochabamba, in the heart of the cocaine country, to see one of the British projects, involving a drugs-rehabilitation centre for addicted children. That evening in the Plaza Colon, we glimpse the extent of a problem that is now boomeranging on Bolivia. Children from the age of seven are selling matchboxes of thin, cocaine-paste cigarettes. The *pitillos* are delivered each evening by men in taxis; they cost about 2 bolivars each (75 cents). The children are all addicts. I speak to one, Javier Garcia, whose whole body twitches with the effect of the drug. When not rubbing his eyes, he smiles apishly.

"Where's your father?"

"My father?" He laughs—a hopeless, bitter laugh. "I never knew my father." But his mother sells sweets down the road.

"Where do you sleep?"

He points into the square. "My bed is the grass. My house is the sky."

There are over 1,200 children like Javier Garcia. Some are addicted to *pitillos*, some to glue. Some sniff gasoline, which destroys the lungs, turning the *gasolee* into a fireball of aggression. By day many work as *sitadores* on the city's buses, shouting out the names of stops. The most fortunate are lured to Sister Stephanie's clinic of Yacuna Saracuy, where the prospect of free dental treatment (with equipment donated by the British) means that they stand a reasonable-to-good chance of staying on for the rehabilitation programme. "All come voluntarily", says Sister Stephanie, who has been 26 years in Bolivia. "What hurts is when they leave just as they're doing well. But our attitude is that they're free." Javier is one who left, after spending four weeks at the clinic. "There was too much temptation", he explains, still rubbing his eyes.

BOLIVIA was traditionally known as Upper Peru. Despite Javier Garcia and the country's many other problems, its transformation has made it a showcase of sorts. Certainly in comparision with Peru—where inflation is running at 2,415%; where the conflict with Maoist guerrillas has resulted in 14,000 deaths; where the military were only prevented from intervening at Christmas by the United States Ambassador, who warned them that his country would not countenance a coup.

"Peru should be known as Lower Bolivia", jokes Mario Vargas Llosa (whose first wife, the Aunt Julia of his famous novel, lives in La Paz). But he has given up his vocation as a novelist to halt the slide, to preserve a fledgling democracy

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that, at nine years old, is the same age as General Meza's horse.

At midday on 4 June in Arequipa, before 40,000 people, Mario Vargas Llosa announced himself as a presidential candidate for next year's elections. His decision to run for President has not been an easy one. He despises the mediocrity of politicians and the petty jealousies which have divided his Democratic Front. These jealousies remain. Three weeks after the Arequipa meeting Vargas Llosa pulled out of the race. He resigned over the question of whether the Front should field separate candidates in the November municipal elections. Vargas Llosa was vehemently against the idea. The point has since been conceded to him and he is once again up and running. The latest poll places him four points ahead of his Left-wing opponents. Alan Garcia, the current President, a 40-year-old opera lover, increasingly gives the impression that he couldn't run a shallow bath, let alone a country, but Peru's Constitution prevents him from holding an election before March 1990.

Meanwhile, the chaos continues.

IT'S NOT EASY to describe with any accuracy a country where there is such a total lack of hope. The President, democratically elected, is so terrified of his own people that he won't let them cross Lima's main square. The policemen guarding it wear neck-protectors and resemble Pizarro's men. One stands on a speak-your-weight machine, kicking it methodically. Everyone else leans in doorways, waiting. "They're waiting for the bus", suggests Vargas Llosa. But they're not. They're waiting for something to happen—anything, they don't know what—which might imply a future that doesn't consist of bag-snatching, or loitering on street corners with blocks of *intis* and a calculator that gives the day's dollar rate.

Three images dominate. Vast hoardings everywhere for Hush Puppies, showing the face of a lugubrious hound. The more you see it, the more it takes on the appearance of a reluctant Cerberus, standing guard over shanty-towns where people have no water, let alone shoes.

Also mist. Banks of it, rolling in from the sea, smearing everything and everyone in its way until all one sees are dim, slightly forbidding shapes which could belong to anyone—novelists . . . politicians . . . soldiers . . . terrorists.

And the myth of the *pistaco*. It is a myth that has recurred since the Conquest, when 170 men loomed out of the hot coastal valleys and seized an empire the size of Europe. It relates to a tall white stranger who carries a knife and lops off the limbs of helpless Indians in order to extract from their torsos a lard with which he oils his machines. The Industrial Revolution was lubricated with this human lard. So were the Viet Nam and Korean wars. It is a myth that *Sendero Luminoso* have resuscitated to their advantage, directing hostility against white-skinned troops—political figures, even—who dare venture from Lima into the hinterland. On 11 April, *El Commercio* (Lima's equivalent of *The Independent*) reported the capture of five *pistacos* in the jungle city of Satipo. They were charged with extracting five litres of *aceite humano* from the abandoned body of one Herminia Parejas Pacheco.

Such reports, reaching the shrouded capital, contribute to the general paranoia of a city under siege, even if the encirclement is largely of its own imagining. Guerrillas of *Sendero Luminoso*, the Shining Path, now operate throughout the country, almost a third of which has been declared an emergency zone. Their leader, a plump psoriatic philosopher, Abimael Guzman (who, like Vargas Llosa, comes from Arequipa), has been in hiding since 1980. He was thought dead, until he broke silence last year with a mammothly tedious reiteration of his Maoist doctrine, accompanied by a blurred photograph showing him in an even plumper state. Earlier this year, he was spotted in a shanty-town near the Lima suburb of Monterrico.

What makes Guzman's movement particularly interesting is its refusal to accept funds or weapons from abroad, relying on beer-can bombs slung on llama-hair cords, and rifles captured from policemen. An indigenous movement, appealing to messianist instincts in the Indian population which it hopes to liberate, *Sendero Luminoso* is also phenomenally successful. Far more toxic than any drug, Guzman's example could be seen as an oracle by a Third World that, chained in perpetuity by debt repayments to the First World, has suddenly no wish to continue participating in the cross-fire politics of the big powers. The Americans would do far better to busy themselves with eradicating the *pensamiento de Presidente Gonzalo* (Guzman's popular sobriquet) than the infinitely more humble coca leaf.

OF COURSE, black propagandists have attempted to link *Sendero* with Peru's *narcotraficantes*, suggesting that they are in a potent cahoots of sorts. But this is difficult to substantiate. Just before he died, I managed to track down the professor who had originally recruited Guzman to Ayacucho University, and whom I suspected of being the kingmaker. Though one son, Osman Morote, was a wanted *Senderista*, though another was in prison suspected of similar sympathies, and though his daughter had that week been imprisoned for her part in an arson attack in Lima, Ephraim Morote Best was adamant that *Sendero* had nothing whatsoever to do with drugs. "*Narcotraficantes* are the biggest criminals in the world", he said. "They are comparable to AIDS, and the guerrillas have no association with them. A Communist must have a higher morality or he is not a Communist. One is a criminal. The other is a saviour of mankind."

At the time, Morote Best was preparing an academic paper on the reappearance of the *pistaco* myth in Peruvian history—since its first mention by Cristoval de Molina in 1571.

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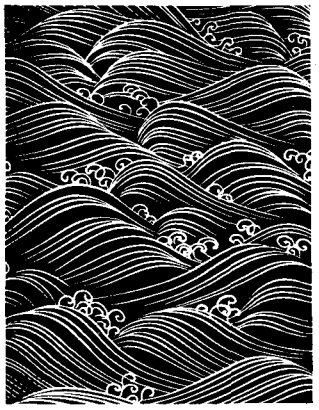
# Rushdie, Steiner, Sobol & others

## *Moral Boundaries—By* LEONIE LICHTENSTEIN



IN 1977, "GAY NEWS" was prosecuted for publishing a blasphemous libel: James Kirkup's poem "The Love That Dares To Speak Its Name" (a resonantly homoerotic title in British society), in which a centurion makes love to the crucified body of Christ. Sir Edmund Leach, analysing the cultural significance of the case, suggested in effect that it hinged on a demarcation dispute.[1]

Whereas in poetry and religious discourse "our contemporary industrial society" could tolerate contradictions—for example the mixture of the sacred and the secular: the "fact" that Christ is both God and man—this poem's extremely explicit treatment of Christ as a sexual being overwhelmed the purportedly poetic mode of expression, as well as the "adorational theme which used the metaphor of homosexual relationship to express the love of the poet for his God. . . . In our kind of social system", mystical and poetic ideas are contrasted with rational thought. The former can tolerate contradictions arising from "one thing [being] piled on top of another in ambiguity and confusion", but the latter proceeds logically, analytically, and takes one thing at a time.

It is, moreover, characteristic of this society to keep the two universes of discourse apart and to favour the rational, asserting that "God and man are beings of wholly different kinds". Their confusion in the poem—and the mixing of profane with divine love—could not be tolerated by people who perceived it as impropriety or blasphemy. At the time, many here received the poem as statement, and denied its truth as empirical fact—where was the evidence that He had been homosexual?

To read the poem thus is to do so without Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief which, for the moment, constitutes poetic truth". Many who objected had not read the poem at all, so the objections were to the event itself: on religious grounds, but also because the poem was seen to show gross disrespect to the Establishment in explicitly mixing human sexuality with divine asexuality. It violently infringed Christ's figurative wholeness as a sacred symbol in Christian mythology, and the seepage made for uneasiness; something seemed out of place—even to me, a Jewish agnostic, who did read it and found the necrophiliac aspect repugnantly physical and the special pleading in it not contained within the poem's form.

But this may seem mystical, and since the mystical and the rational are opposed in this society, as Leach put it, with the latter generally preferred, especially in argument, it is more respectable to adduce "facts" as a way of coping with irrational uneasiness and confusion about how to receive the poem. And to invoke the law.

One may also say that this poem was not good enough for what it was daring. Had Kirkup failed to make acceptable the contradiction between being homosexual and Christian? Had the body of Christ become too literal? But there is no machinery for taking someone to court for being a bad poet. The editor of *Gay News* was convicted and fined, and the conviction was upheld on appeal. The balance of power was restored.

LEACH STRESSED the implications for power relations of infringing boundaries between contexts, and this rather free rendering of his analysis[2] may provide a context in which to understand the Muslim reception of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses,* and the contradictions inherent in the author's project which have caused him to be perceived as so transgressive.

Rushdie is a writer who has been called a magic realist, itself an oxymoron, a contradictory term borrowed from painting to describe writers who interfuse the fantastic with the recognisably realistic—sometimes with certain contemporary political realities which cannot be broached directly. Magic realism acts as a way of bridging the gap between the sayable and the unsayable, and of smuggling in, by its own bizarre form and texture, criticism of the irrational quality life has assumed for authors in societies inhospitable to their ideas. The form itself reflects an attitude to experience and is a form of action.

[1] Edmund Leach, "Profanity and Context", *New Scientist,* 20 October 1977, p. 136.

[2] Leach uses the language of Structuralism, contrasting metaphor (which is synthetic and uses arbitrary associations) with metonymy (which is analytic and proceeds by logical demonstration). I have glossed and adapted his argument for my purpose, trying to eschew his "terms of art".



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In literary criticism, "textualists" warn readers against "the unseemly rush from word to world" which prematurely treats a "text" as "natural" rather than as an artefact—which is made out of words or pictures, and not out of Life. All texts have been constructed. When they refer, it is to other texts. But there are rules and conventions which govern how words and sentences shall be related to objects and events in the world "out there". Knowledge of these rules, usually tacit, constitutes cultural competence in the silent language of a particular culture. All readers are situated somewhere, some are more naive than others perhaps, but reading is "not an innocent activity".[3]

This view meshes with more materialist, Marxist literary theory, some of which does not shy away from conceiving art as being "about" Life, but applauds contradiction in it for showing within the form itself that social reality is susceptible to change, whereas the ahistorical "bourgeois novel" reveals its "false consciousness" by presenting reality as seamlessly, statically "natural".[4] However, the proliferation of genres within the arts—fiction, faction, factoid, documentary, "dramamentary", "reel on reel", magic realism—raises problems. Which rules is it appropriate to invoke from our repertoires? How should we receive, classify, and frame what we read or see? Which rules can be infringed by a writer, playwright, or film-maker—and which cannot?

RUSHDIE'S FICTIONAL mode is to pile "one thing on top of another in confusion and ambiguity", to quote Leach on poetry. Piecemeal reading of *The Satanic Verses,* extracting bits of it as examples of blasphemy, distorts it (as the same process, applied by the prosecution, distorted *Lady Chatterley's Lover* at the Penguin obscene libel trial). Its form embodies incongruities, ambiguities, and contradictions. The signals coming off Rushdie's pages are not those of documentary. He does not, to quote Leach again, "show what is the case by distinguishing one thing at a time, in sequence, as in . . . logical demonstration". Instead he incorporates historical events and real people.

Rushdie's personal position is also contradictory. What he is—a westernised Eton-and-Oxford-educated British non-practising Muslim Indian with Marxist leanings—pervades his writing, as Kirkup's identity pervaded his, for writing is not an innocent activity either. Writers (even magic realists), quite as much as readers, are situated somewhere. To the Muslim religion, which makes no distinction between faith and fact, and whose discourse does not accommodate contradiction or change, the fact that Rushdie writes in a poetic or metaphoric mode does not signify. His writing addresses a limited community of Western readers—his book is much more bought than read, especially among those who object to it—and what signifies in one culture may not do so in another.

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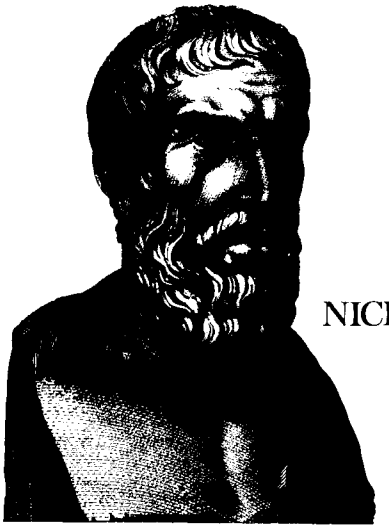
[3] Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (Routledge, 1975), pp. 129, 130.

[4] See Georg Lukács, *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (Merlin Press, 1969.)


LIVING IN AN ALIBI SOCIETY

A Catalogue of Pretensions



NICHOLAS A.H. STACEY

This social critique traces the history of certain ideas on the English Industrial spirit and their impact on contemporary British thought on education, manners and class and also examines 'the rise of the professionals and intellectuals'. Nicholas Stacey describes 'an alibi society' as the collective state of mind of society forever finding excuses for itself rather than pursuing success. ". . . fascinating and wise." — ENCOUNTER

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A neutral acknowledgement of this is itself a mild form of that relativism which is so foreign to the Muslim faith, which unlike Christianity has not taken on board Darwinism and Relativity. Both these sources of Western rationalism may have contributed to relativism, though it is the social sciences, anthropology particularly, that have been largely responsible for perceiving cultural difference without wanting to evaluate it. In the Muslim faith there is no dualism between the discourses of science and religion, and the political power of Islam is enmeshed in this unified discourse. It thinks in absolutes. Though it is said to value tolerance, it will not tolerate what it sees as complacent indifference to the Koran, which is God's final missive divinely revealed, or to Mohammed, a very real person who is the final model of man. Still less can it tolerate without erosion of its power what it perceives to be blatant abuse of both or either.

The overarching context of the reception of *The Satanic Verses* is the debate in the present world-as-global-village between Relativism and Absolutism. It would seem that cultural relativism, increasingly valued in Western culture in this century as a tolerant and progressive corrective to ethnocentricism, once more requires—and is beginning—to be reconsidered.[5] Which values are superordinate, and where? When the British Home Secretary expressed sensitivity to the strength of British Muslim feelings about *The Satanic Verses* (coupled with observations on abuse of Britain to be found in it), Rushdie, in hiding from the worldwide strength of this feeling and under police protection, was quoted as saying that the Government was preparing to do the dirty on him and abrogate British commitment to tolerance and freedom of speech. This did not happen, but questions of value—or of *Realpolitik*—persist. There *are* British hostages in Iranian hands and Muslim voters in Britain.

One cannot presume to speak for a billion Muslims, 20% of the world's population, 88% of whom are Sunni and not Shi'ite like Ayatollah Khomeini, and only some of whom live in Britain. But by 1989, it has anyway become less certain who in Britain can speak for whom. What is included in, and what excluded from, "the British way of life"?

"Our society", which Leach in his article twelve years ago frequently invoked quite confidently, is now a more labile term. To Muslim fundamentalists, the writing finger does not move on: the Word is literal; to some Christians—the Bishop of Durham for instance—it is more literary, figurative, spiritual. And there are moderate Muslims too; we hear too little of them. The jury convicting *Gay News* in 1977 could conclude that the poem was:

> ". . . so obscene or scurrilous as to vilify the Christian religion and be calculated or tend to arouse strong feelings of resentment which could lead to a breach of the peace."

A decade later Mary Whitehouse failed to prevent the showing of *The Last Temptation of Christ,* Martin Scorsese's film in which Christ on the Cross is assailed by the Devil with human male sexual fantasies.

Many think that common-law blasphemy should be abolished, while some of the Muslim community here *have* breached the peace; but some would prefer to use the law, and have tried to get it extended beyond the Christian religion. The 1988 Education Reform Act says that religious *teaching* should take account of all the main world religions, but it prescribes a compulsory daily act of mainly Christian worship in schools. "We" are trying to hang on, but those in the littoral world of the literal Word in Britain, those on the margins and feeling powerless, are clamouring for visible signs of validation.

SILENCE MIGHT be the better part of an appropriate response to the act of worship prescribed by the Act. But it is words which multiply within and without *The Satanic Verses* and its author—and contradictions. One is that Rushdie, exploring the clash between East and West and its implications for Muslim identity in a post-colonial world (and particularly his own identity as a successful modern Western writer who is a deracinated Muslim), should use a mode which the West, broadly speaking, can tolerate, but which the fundamentalist Muslim East, situated all over the world, cannot. Another is that he is having to be protected by the police force of a country which he has identified as institutionally racist and ethnocentric—both in his fiction, which has been rewarded with this society's most glitterary prizes, and in his polemics, which have been conducted from within its most "Establishment" institutions of power, including television.

Furthermore, British support for Rushdie has been seen by Islam as a continuation of the very colonialism and cultural imperialism whose persistent power he has inveighed against, while anything but "unconditional" support for him is seen by some British radicals as appeasement of the Iranian régime by "the Thatcher Government", which is "prepared to cover up all its brutalities" in order to "obtain lucrative trade deals". The price of democracy is indeed eternal vigilance—but vigilance is needed too against alarmist extrapolation masquerading as argument.

The quotations in the preceding paragraph come from an (unprovenanced) *"Defend Salman Rushdie!"* sheet handed out outside The Royal Court Theatre on 19 April 1989, at the opening night of *Iranian Nights,* a 45-minute play-for-the-nonce—or for nine nights—by Tariq Ali and Howard Brenton, which is likely to be seen on Channel 4 television. Couched initially in the fairy-tale terms evoked by its title, it showed its contemporary hand(s) immediately.

The Poet, a larky word-spinner, nominally Omar Khayyam, was Rushdie; the Caliph/Holy Man, Khomeini; and Scheherazade, in thrall to the Caliph—the story-teller trying to keep her head on her shoulders—was she also Rushdie? The drama outside the theatre modulated into that inside, an effect compounded by television cameras whirring, the presence of Michael Grade, and the *frisson* provided by police searches. All this gave cogency to the Poet's

[5] See, for example, Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (Simon & Schuster, 1987); Anthony Burgess, *Any Old Iron* (Hutchinson, 1989); and George Steiner, "Touching the Void: The Spell of Nothingness in Modern Art" (Patrons of New Art Annual Lecture at the Tate Gallery, 22 March 1989).

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utterance: "What madness have my verses unleashed? A fiction greater than any poet's imagination", itself subsumed in "the same old story, power, terror and *Realpolitik*".

Halfway through the play, its characters become an Asian father and son in Britain. Satan looks in, and Scheherazade becomes an excoriating moral Chorus. The focus of attack becomes Britain, a "nowhere in the West", and *agitprop* and special pleading set in. The son, who has become a fundamentalist because of British racism, explains to his moderate father that his pride in his faith offsets his humiliations in this alien and hostile culture which he intends to convert to the Muslim faith. The father reduces this to humorous absurdity, asking him where he thinks "the leaders of our Muslim world will go" when he has "closed down the brothels and casinos in Mayfair". But Scheherazade scourges us all for our moral turpitude, asking why ". . . the West think[s] it can do no wrong", yet expects "the refugee to be more tolerant, more wise than any human being can be"—whereas she finds that ". . . the miracle is so many of us [the East] do have the strength to bear the abuse . . . the blind ignorance of what we are and where we come from".

In conclusion she asks rhetorically, "What finer sound is there than a human being singing against Cruelty, against Hate?" Here follows a roll-call of great, persecuted writers, including Dante, Marlowe, Wilde, Omar Khayyam, Joyce, Lawrence, O'Casey, Brecht, Marquez—and Salman Rushdie. Conflation, thou art afoot. The guilt for "the Rushdie Affair" turns out to be largely Britain's.

The play does attempt a nuanced treatment of a complex matter, but in trying to have things every which-way, it loses focus, suffering in the end from hardening of the categories: its radical grid becomes a straitjacket within which contradictions and the freedom being espoused sit uncomfortably. It is at times fanciful and even beguiling; but, lacking the porousness and provisionality of a fiction like *The Satanic Verses*, the writing never transforms its topic imaginatively or rises above the declarative, schematic, and predictable—particularly in its jokes against Britain, "a small island in Satan's thrall, where two Queens [sit] on a single throne". The audience did not have to recognise itself in the benighted British Aunt Sallies of the play—had it not come to applaud their demolition?— so the response could be somewhat self-congratulatory. Perhaps we should have remembered that we were also witnessing how in Britain encroachments on liberty can be comfortably discussed—at liberty.

*The Satanic Versus*, *Iranian Nights*, and their reception are part of the post-colonial discourse which in the literary world has hitherto been confined to words. As a prominent participator in this discourse, Rushdie has said that "The Raj Revival" rampant in "Thatcherite Britain" reveals its ruler/subject ideology by making Indians merely "bit players in their own history" in "Raj fictions" whose very "form insists that the British are the *ones whose stories matter*, and that is so much less than the whole truth that it must be called a falsehood".[6]

Now Rushdie is centre-stage, but, because of where he comes *from*, he is perforce an absent hero, though his own personal "story" matters profoundly. As for the form of his

[6] Salman Rushdie, *The Observer*, 1 April 1984.

**A REVIEW OF BRITAIN'S MOST RADICAL CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT BY BRITAIN'S MOST REACTIONARY CONSERVATIVE REVIEW**

The *Salisbury Review*
SEPTEMBER 1989

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fiction, which does make Indian stories matter, this does not signify to the wide Muslim world; and the frequent stressing of his novel's status as a fiction has failed to protect him from Muslim anathema and danger. Literature has become—literally—a matter of life and death. What price now Auden's "poetry makes nothing happen", that it "exists in the valley of its own saying"? Such aestheticism looks not dissimilar to "textualism". But society continues to rush in unseemly fashion from word to world, and the proclamation by some recent textual theorists of "The Death of the Author", in author's and reader's shared enslavement by the racing plurality of language and the primacy of "text", has assumed a sinister, not a theoretical flavour.

How much can "we" in fact tolerate, even in a climate of relativism which favours not judging as if "our" culture's standards are the only criteria—and in some quarters favours not judging at all? How blurred are our boundaries? But first, why should "we" tolerate Rushdie? Well, of course, because of democracy and Voltaire's much-quoted (apocryphal) utterance; in short because of where "we", the post-Enlightenment West, purport to be "coming from". For Muslims, it is particularly because of where he comes from that Rushdie is so intolerable. The *Observer* newspaper, by trailing it on television and then foregrounding it repeatedly in its issue of 26 February 1989, endorsed what is implicit in Rushdie's claim in his review of Philip Roth's "novelist's autobiography" (more blurred boundaries signalled there): that "Roth's responses to being . . . vilified have been . . . very moving, even helpful to this similarly beleaguered writer". (The same issue carried a long article on the matter by Edward Said, the Palestinian American academic, a non-practising Muslim, in which he found it relevant to attack Israel.)

In his appalling situation, who can blame Rushdie for taking comfort anywhere he can find it? But the quotation above, especially when editorialised out of context by the newspaper, suggests not merely that Salman Rushdie's response to vilification has been similar to Philip Roth's, but that the response of Jews to Roth has been similar to that of Muslims to Rushdie.

THIS CONFLATION must be contradicted: Roth has referred to "the tiny turbulence . . . stirred up" by his "first book back in 1959"; Rushdie has had death threats heaped on him. Differences are not all of the same weight and value, and those of degree may become those of kind. To yield to the siren-call of absolute relativism (the contradiction is intentional) is to land on the nihilistic reductionist rocks. The injunction "not in front of the *goyim*" still pervades a Jewish upbringing, though it is repudiated as an instance of "the ghetto mentality".

The only discernible similarity between Roth's and Rushdie's position is that, as some Jews felt Roth was exposing his own people, so, from a Muslim perspective, Rushdie may be seen as compounding blasphemy with betrayal—though the publication of his book is hardly, as Muslims in Turkey are said to have alleged, an instance of "British Zionism". Another conflation which must be avoided is that which would equate Rushdie's fiction with Jim Allen's purportedly factual play *Perdition,* which alleged Zionist complicity in the Nazi Holocaust. What is seen as the power of the Jewish "lobby" in preventing its being staged has been contrasted, and with concomitant resentment, with Muslim powerlessness to get *The Satanic Verses* banned in Britain—as if the two works addressed similar things, similarly.

THE RELATIONSHIP of art to history, politics, religion, culture, and identity is fraught with moral and aesthetic ambiguities. Though the stress in much contemporary literary theory on the artefactual nature of art and on the questionable status of terms like "reality" and "truth" has unsettled certain old certainties, in practice works which treat recent history in a metaphoric way can be even more contentious than those addressing them in documentary mode. *Both the context in which they are received and the address from which they come signify.*

The Nazi Holocaust has been increasingly used by artists who were not part of it. Does this mean that it has come of age artistically—the very use of this word in this context produces a shudder—so that it can be incorporated in a fiction like D. M. Thomas's *The White Hotel* or, much earlier, be appropriated by Sylvia Plath for poetic imagery to explore her personal feelings of victimisation? To do so may still seem profane to many people so near to the event as to prevent their distancing themselves sufficiently to frame it as art.

There are people still alive in the world whose memories, minds and bodies are branded by no fiction. And there are people still alive whose "revisionist history" questions that the Holocaust ever happened. Both are part of the receiving context for such works as George Steiner's novella *The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.* When this work was translated to the stage in London early in 1982, Steiner said on British television that he would not like it to be performed before a neo-Nazi audience.[7] In it he risks playing devil's advocate by giving good lines and powerful rhetoric to Hitler, as Milton gave Satan heroic speeches. But Satan's mythologically evil status is unassailable, whereas Hitler's status as a devil is recent enough to be destabilised by the tendentious, and is interfered with by the fact that he was also inescapably an actual man, born just 100 years ago.

If in our secular age we are accustomed to seeing God and man as beings of a wholly different kind, as Edmund Leach asserted, can we accept the Devil and man as beings of the same kind in a work which mixes modes? Is Steiner like a theologian trying to have it both ways and asking us to read *The Portage* as both history and metaphor? Is his a work of magic realism? He has used the initials "A.H." instead of Adolf Hitler's name, much as Orwell always wrote out *Nineteen Eighty-four* in full to underline the book's status as warning and not as prophecy for a particular year. But the appropriation of the factual Hitler for a fiction which both analytically and anagogically attempts to extend his significance into the mythical realms of archetypal evil, by his use as a metaphor, blurred the boundaries between fact and fic-

[7] George Steiner, *The South Bank Show,* February 1982.

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tion in such a way as to cause some people (historians among them[8]) to "answer" Steiner's "*fictional* Hitler"—his own careful typography—with facts which refuted Hitler's "case".

"A TEXT CHANGES every time it is read; how much more does it change when it is transposed from one medium to another", so that "literature's moral landscape" is replaced.[9] The cogency of this statement was highlighted dramatically by the fracas following the staging of *The Portage*. Perhaps it was too soon for even a Jew of European origins to dramatise the Holocaust in a metaphoric mode. Hitler was not a figure of speech, but a reality outside language.

Steiner overestimated the cultural competence of some of his audience if he expected a sensorily drenched stage version of his novella, with a virtuoso performance by the actor impersonating Hitler, to enable us to keep our distance and recognise the self-deceiving, double-thinking part of ourselves in him. He de-familiarised Hitler so much that not alienation from him, but attraction to him, it was feared—even by the author—might be felt by some watching him on the stage. Or offence could be taken. How to "read" him became problematic. On the page, confusion was less likely, for reading is a more reflective process than viewing, and one does have the author, alive or dead, to guide one, *pace* literary theory. But the play ran its course.

[8] See Martin Gilbert, *The Times*, 6 March 1982.

[9] Robin Chapman (in another context), *The Times*, 13 December 1983.

Ours is not a homogeneous culture, and notions of good and evil slip and slide. Yet Hitler has for half this century been a stable reference-point, absolute and fixed "out there", for defining evil to the kind of audience Steiner addressed. So what was Steiner doing, scourging us with doubts, unsettling this status which Hitler has in modern history and mythology, addressing us as if we shared a common belief system, but reminding us of culturally and morally relative positions?

Steiner's "A.H." points out that the Jews made three gods for the world—Jehovah, Jesus, and Marx—thereby inventing conscience with which to blackmail it. Each embodies a different concept of good and evil, though all present themselves as absolute. Does this mean that all ideology is suspect or that all Jews are suspect for inventing it? For it is the phenomenon of anti-Semitism that Steiner repeatedly wrestles with in order to explain it to himself and to a world in which, in the proleptic words of Yeats, "things fall apart" and "mere anarchy is loosed"; a world where to Muslims—and to Jews—the first, let alone the second Coming is yet to happen, but where "the best lack all conviction".

Reading the novella turns the mind back upon itself. By de-familiarising Hitler, Steiner jolts us into looking at ourselves, making us explore the nature of human evil through self-criticism. We recognise what the poet Isaac Rosenberg, confronting the outbreak of World War I, called the "ancient crimson curse": the evil within all of us. If we fall for Hitler's casuistry, we are Falling all over again, and we haven't learnt a thing about ourselves from the Holocaust.

This is how *The Portage* may work on the page. But on the stage? Should a receiving context determine whether or

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not a work gets published or staged? Can it be available only to some once it is let out? Is this censorship? In a democracy, after all, adults may choose what they read or view. Yet some suggest that sensitivity to the sensibilities of certain potential readers should have produced self-censorship on the part of the author and publisher of *The Satanic Verses*. And though George Steiner's credentials on the Holocaust are impeccable, what account of the sensibilities of survivors with particular scars is taken when he offers a more generalised typology of evil in which Hitler has become a fictional "Hitler" or "A.H.", but is also linked with the state of Israel?

GERMAN AUDIENCES were confronted with their own recent history in 1984, in a play produced on the fringe of the Berlin Festival which also deployed Adolf Hitler and required quite explicitly that the audience "read" itself in relation to him. Herman van Harten, the playwright of *Ich hinst nicht, Adolf Hitler ist est gewesen* (*It wasn't me, it was Adolf Hitler*), addressed himself to the question. "How near is Hitler to us today?" by seducing the audience into Nazi feelings and then deserting it, with the finger pointing at those guilty feelings of attraction.

The production relied on creating a particular relationship with the audience, in a no-holds-barred savage satire on the idea of freedom in literature, art, and politics, and on shocking by exposing unconscious and forbidden urges. One was prepared for all this by the publicity handout, which stated "Dear Public we the actors welcome you", and "King Ubu is dead! Long live . . . yes, but who?"—which raised the ghost of Alfred Jarry and prepared one for violence, farce, and scatology in a protesting anti-realistic mode.

ANOTHER PLAY IN THAT 1984 Berlin Festival was Joshua Sobol's *Ghetto*, produced there by Peter Zadek with Brecht's ghost hovering, and in London by the National Theatre.[10] The play investigated the relationship in 1942 between Jewish actors and musicians in the ancient Vilna ghetto, and a sadistic *Gestapo* chief who himself has musical leanings of a psychopathic kind, such that his machine-gun, his saxophone, and his creatures—the actors and musicians in the ghetto—are all equal to him as instruments to play upon. *Ghetto* uses the theatre to show "how an entire community tried to cope at the time by doing the best they could to remain a community"[11] as a form of resistance in the shadow of the Nazi Holocaust. It explored the sensitive issue of Jewish collaboration (the focus also of *Perdition*).

The playwright is an Israeli who repudiates "the ghetto mentality", feeling that this matter must be aired "in front of the *goyim*", so to speak, because trust between nations can only be restored by telling a true story. It then becomes the audience's problem how to receive it without exploiting what it shows of Jewish imperfections.

Sobol's work has not always found favour among his primary audience in Israel—but his life has not been threatened. *Iranian Nights* attempted to address Muslim imperfections, but ultimately made a rather tendentious apologia for them. Sobol's concern, not unlike that of former colonial peoples, is with the effect of the past on identity in the present: how can Israel today cope not only with the past genocide of Jews, but with millennia of humiliation? (Other plays by Sobol have confronted Jewish-Arab relations.)

In *Ghetto*, Sobol distinguishes between Dessler, a Jewish police officer and unregenerate opportunist who collaborates with his captors (those in contact with oppression risk contamination), and Gens, the Jewish head of the ghetto, who was an authentic Jewish leader confronted by agonising choices in trying to serve his community. Gens bargains with Kittel, the *SS* officer, his intention being to save Jews by sacrificing others; ultimately, he chooses to die with those he has sacrificed. It is his energy which transforms the actors by providing them with an opportunity to exercise their creativity once more, thereby also enabling them to acquire work permits and consequently to be—temporarily—among the living.

The moral question of choosing who shall die is early introduced through the device of the ventriloquist's dummy, a licensed Fool. When his master, the ventriloquist Srulik (the play's narrator), begs Kittel for Hayyah's life, appealing to him as an artist to spare another artist, the dummy asks, "What if she had lost her voice? Would she have no right to live?"

Elsewhere the question is addressed by doctors, a judge and a rabbi, who debate how the insufficient supplies of insulin shall be deployed. The painful subtlety with which choice is explored in this discussion is counterpoised in montage with the Nazi's easy order to kill every third child in a family. But Kittel, mad *and* bad (how else to treat Nazis?), is no simple stereotype. He too asks crucial questions. He does not simply hate Jews; he is interested in their contribution to German glory. And Sobol is interested in him, as Shakespeare is in Iago, but also in what it is that the world wants from Jews.

First performed in Haifa in 1984, the play has been staged all over the Western world, and won the 1985 German Critics Award for Best Foreign Play. Sobol's inspiration was the discovery of a document, a diary recording the opening of a theatre in Vilna in the midst of the Holocaust. The diary was kept by Kruk, the ghetto librarian—for the library is another structure which was kept alive in the midst of the Final Solution.

Kruk, a member of the socialist *Bund* which opposed the Zionist position espoused by Gens, was implacably opposed to dealing with the Germans in any way. He rejected "theatre in a graveyard" even if it might save Jewish lives. The play suggests that, more profoundly, theatre might stave off spiritual corruption by enabling the Jews to keep their culture alive. The German scholar Dr Paul is recognisably played by the same actor who plays Kittel, and indeed they share an intense interest in Jews. Ironically, it is Dr Paul who, knowledgeable in the Jewish culture he is committed to

[10] The English version of *Ghetto*, translated by David Lan and directed by Nicholas Hytner, had its first night at the Olivier Theatre on 27 April 1989.

[11] Joshua Sobol in discussion with Paul Barker, *Third Ear*, Radio 3, 22 March 1989, valuable also for other insights into Sobol's work.

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rooting out, questions Kruk about his anti-Zionism and tries unsuccessfully to tempt him to replace Gens as Jewish leader.

All these people actually existed, and most of them died. Srulik survived—Sobol found him living nearby, in Tel Aviv. *Ghetto* is in no sense a dramatisation of Kruk's diary, as in plays and films derived from *The Diary of Anne Frank*; but though not in documentary mode, it is, like the Holocaust itself, realistically surreal. Distancing techniques—such as direct address to the audience and the use, as a central structuring device, of a form of play (in which music and dance play a large part) within the "play" directed and stage-managed by the Nazi—are brilliantly used as artistic resources, but are also naturalised by Sobol.

The artists put on cabarets and satirical sketches and plays to divert Kittel in order to pay him for their lives. Hayyah is obliged to sing for him to pay for a 60 gramme shortfall in the dried beans discovered on her at the outset of the play. Kittel, a connoisseur of both art and murder, measures the value of each performance against her "debt". Though art and atrocity are brought dangerously close together, aesthetic considerations are not allowed to blur the moral landscape of the play. The use of theatrical illusion, particularly the brilliantly expressionistic dummy—which, a puppet and outside the action, is played by a live person and is finally killed off—is offset by the awareness that these were real-life performers who are now "the characters" of the play. The potentially startling incorporation of music and dance in the presence of death offers affirmation of the humanity of those exterminated.

In their play-acting while awaiting their deaths, the ghetto's inmates use the gigantic mound of clothing left behind by those already dispatched as their "dressing-up box", with the encouragement of the *Gestapo* chief. The clothing dominates the set, both as eloquent symbol and fact: it is recyclable waste, which Weiskopf, the Jewish tailor/entrepreneur, turns into a business venture. At the end of the play, articles detach themselves from the grotesque mound in disembodied fashion and perform like manipulated puppets. This metaphorical *danse macabre* is also a realistic device of the inmates, who are actually inside the gyrating clothes, to disguise from the *Gestapo* chief who is being entertained the fact that one of their troupe has escaped. They do not succeed.

The escaper is the singer Hayyah, an object of particular attraction to Kittel. She borrowed a Russian book from the library, with the help of which her group has blown up a train. The massed chorus in the final satirical revue (which plays on Shylock's "Hath not a Jew" speech) sports Hitler moustaches and sings Beethoven's "Ode to Joy". This is all highly diverting to the Nazi. He exclaims: "Your artistry has saved your lives." But he has discerned the absence of Hayyah and divined her part in the blowing up of the train, and enjoys the artistic symmetry of implementing the Jewish credo that "each Jew is responsible for all others", gunning them all down as they fall upon the ceremonial Jewish *challah* bread with which he pretends to reward them for their revue—having first terrorised them by "pretending" that he is going to have them shot. Hindsight hovers in the form of our knowledge—which was not fully available to a man like Gens—that there was no possibility of dealing with any Nazis, for none of them required any motive for killing Jews, even the "darlings" among them.

ALTHOUGH THE EFFECT of grafting play-acting on to their situation is surrealistic—or a form of magic realism—it does not make the ghastly truth of what was really happening drain away. In Berlin, the position of the audience *vis-à-vis* the "players" and the play within the play (a recurring feature of Sobol's work) produced ambivalent feelings and disorientation. Who and what was being applauded?

If it was the unquenchable, creative human spirit, some non-Jewish Berliners none the less saw *Ghetto* as an inappropriately lightweight "musical" about the Holocaust. Or were we all, by means of Brecht's *Verfremdungs-Effekt*—which is used to make us think, not feel—being instructed in how to survive? Perhaps the play was using gallows humour, an indispensable part of the Jewish survival-kit, legitimately. But to see Esther Opharim (who played Hayyah in the Berlin production and came trailing top-of-the-tops stardom) singing torch songs in the ghetto well enough to be applauded for *her* performance—this was alienation, rather than Brechtian estrangement. Perhaps because of where one was, it was more difficult in this Berlin production to separate—as Brecht's didactic theory demands—the performance by actors, who sought to please the actual audience, from the performance by the *characters*, impersonating real people who lived and died, who were forced to please the Nazis.

*All* bordered on play-acting. Our benevolent applause allowed the actors to depart, as the real actors could not. Yet many in the theatre audience were visibly and uncomplicatedly harrowed by the play. Others left—whether out of pain or disgust or boredom (it was very long) one did not know. Being part of a London audience as the receiving context for such a play presented fewer problems, though even there it was rather disturbing to find that the *tour de force* by the actor who played the *Gestapo* officer received the greatest acclaim. Whose attractive skills had we fallen for? The resurrection of all participants for the curtain-call was also disturbing.

In his play *Good*, C. P. Taylor skilfully retains the de-

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marcation line between life and art.[12] He uses actual bands playing on stage as a dramatic metaphor for the imaginary bands which play sentimental light music in the central character's head symbolically throughout the play. But this aesthetically-oriented fictional character, having failed to say "No" at critical moments, ultimately becomes implicated as an annihilator, second-in-command to Eichmann, and finds in the death-camp that "the band is *real*!" On stage, in the Royal Shakespeare Company production, this line was chillingly delivered directly to the audience. The metaphor of the bands succeeds very well as a defamiliarising device, but there is no doubt about the priority in Taylor's ordering of experience, no artistic fantasising about the reality of death in the camps.

It might be too soon to treat Hitler as a metaphor, and indeed the Holocaust is too vast in import to be raided *for* metaphors. But this is not to say that its horror cannot be focused by means of metaphor in order to prevent us from forgetting, and repeating it. Reviewing *In Darkest Germany*, a documentary book by Victor Gollancz, in *Tribune* in 1947, George Orwell wrote:

> "This business of making people *conscious* of what is happening outside their own small circle is one of the major problems of our time, and a new literary technique will have to be evolved to meet it."

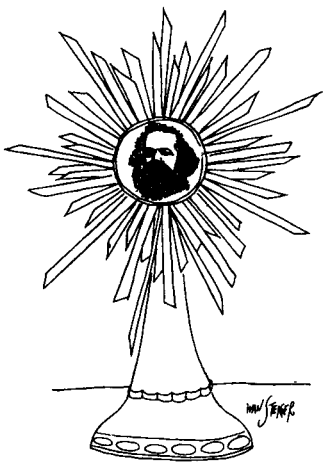
The world's "major problems" listed by Orwell in 1947 were "starvation, ruined cities, concentration camps, homeless refugees, persecuted Jews". Many of these problems still exist. Since Orwell's time, television in particular informs us of them, but it does not always make us "conscious" of them. It is works of art, including some presented on television, which may still, uniquely, affect consciousness.

Under oppression art really matters. People complain that it does not matter enough to, and in, Britain. Perhaps Salman Rushdie may draw some comfort from the extent to which he has disproved them. But libertarian tolerance of relativity of taste in books, plays, and films entails a refusal to judge absolutely, or to be categorical or censorious. Or to censor. Does it also put one in a relativist position with regard to the moral landscapes of art?

[12] Cecil P. Taylor, *Good* (Methuen, 1983). The play was first staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company, directed by Howard Davies, on 2 September 1981, at The Warehouse; the production moved on 20 April 1982 to the Aldwych Theatre.

# Religious Instincts, Sacred Landscapes

## *Two Russian Novels—By* ANTHONY GARDNER



NOT LONG AGO, an acquaintance was taking photographs in Red Square when a uniformed man ran towards her shouting and waving his arms. It was obvious from his demeanour that she was committing some kind of offence, but since a good many other people in the square were also wielding cameras, it was difficult to say exactly what. In the end it transpired not that she had unwittingly photographed a *KGB* outpost, but that in order to obtain a more interesting angle she had *knelt on the ground*—an act strictly forbidden in the sacred heart of the Soviet Union.

Why should such a proscription be necessary? The answer seems to be that, despite 70 years of State discouragement, the Russians are still a deeply religious people. Visit any public place in the USSR and you will find evidence of this. The churches may have been closed down or turned into museums, but the nation cannot do without an object of worship; and in order to satisfy this need the powers that be have promoted Lenin to take the place of God, although to allow kneeling beside his mausoleum would make the substitution too overt. Lapel badges bearing his name have superseded crucifixes, and heroic posters are hung instead of icons—the instinct remains the same.

One of the most striking things about Leonid Borodin's *The Third Truth*[1] and Chingiz Aitmatov's *The Place of the Skull Hair*[2] is that so many of the characters—even those who are not believers—have a Christian frame of reference. Two shepherds making their way through a difficult pass in *The Place of the Skull* repeat the "crossing prayer" of their predecessors, despite the knowledge that it represents "backwardness and ignorance", while Selivanov, the anti-hero of *The Third Truth*, feels vulnerable to the censure of the God whose existence he denies: ". . . If Ivan thought God was there, even if Selivanov didn't, it still meant Ivan's God could look down on Selivanov's life from his bell-tower! Well, then, how would Selivanov's life appear to him?"

The two novels share not only a religious theme but also a preoccupation with landscape. *The Third Truth* is set in the *taiga* (the forest-lands of Siberia), and focuses on two men

[1] *The Third Truth*. By LEONID BORODIN. Translated by CATRIONA KELLY. Collins Harvill, £10.95.

[2] *The Place of the Skull*. By CHINGIZ AITMATOV. Translated by NATASHA WARD. Faber, £12.99.

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whose lives revolve around it, the poacher Selivanov and the ranger Ryabinin. Despite their rivalry, a strange friendship develops between the pair, which survives Ryabinin's long confinement in a prison-camp after an encounter with corrupt officialdom. For both, the *taiga* has a mystic life of its own—though one of which Selivanov considers himself to have a special understanding—beside which the concerns of humans are insignificant.

> "When he emerged among people, leaving the *taiga* at his back, Selivanov thought of it as an entity, whole and vital, but separate from himself, and this separation he perceived as a disruption forced on him from outside, a violation of nature and the natural order.
>
> But when he returned, the *taiga* again ceased to be something secondary to him, again he felt he was its brain; they were not two but one, he and the *taiga*; moreover, only in his presence did the *taiga* bare its face, the whole completeness of its being."

Initially, the "third truth" of the title is a political one. Selivanov, having lived through the Revolution as a child, feels allegiance to no régime: "My dad didn't have any time for the Whites nor for the Reds either . . . . Let them go at each other's throats, he says, we're for the third truth, we are." In practice, however, such detachment is not always possible—Selivanov's father, it emerges, was shot for helping a White General escape from the Bolsheviks, and when the General returns years later to die in his native land, Selivanov finds himself helping to hide the man and his family. It is the General who introduces the notion that the third truth is religious in nature; Selivanov has little time for God. His religious instincts are strong, but avoid translation into human morality: his attitude to life is essentially the same as that of the animals he traps, and like them he is prepared to kill to preserve his territory—when the Party sends officials to interfere with the *taiga*, he ambushes and shoots them, not out of malice, but nevertheless with some glee. For him, the greatest sin is melancholy, which breaks through his Wordsworthian communion with nature:

> "In it everything lost its bonds, and meaning flew away; the tree was left to itself, the sky to itself; and the beast under sky and tree, unconnected with the soul of either the one or the other; and man looks around and everything is against him, and he against everything; and then you begin to think that everything in the world, from the smallest blade of grass up to the sun, exists in an order quite different from what you'd thought before, and that this order is detached from you on all sides, and the thought makes you want to howl . . . ."

It is at such moments that Leonid Borodin comes into his own. Throughout much of *The Third Truth*, the narrative flow is jolted by phrases like "the band was playing its guts out", which presumably sound almost as awkward in the original as they do in translation. But in the most crucial episodes, where the author deals with fundamental questions of life, death and faith, the language is simple, direct and beautiful—and these passages stand out like shining pools seen from a hilltop. Altogether, in fact, the sacred aspects of the novel are more skilfully handled than the profane: in

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Ryabinin's final confrontation with the bulldozers which have invaded the *taiga*, the breakneck pace fails to conceal a poverty of content, whereas the book's spiritual climax—his discovery of God and of the third truth—is both convincing and moving.

IN *THE PLACE OF THE SKULL*, the reverse is true: Chingiz Aitmatov is masterful in his descriptions of nature, and presents a compelling narrative, but is less sure in his discussion of religion. The dominant landscape of this book is the Moyun-Kum steppes, and the author brilliantly evokes its wildness and grandeur, focusing as much on its animal as on its human inhabitants. The framework for his story is provided by the adventures of two wolves, but this book is not a lupine *Watership Down*. While Aitmatov, like Borodin, enjoys comparing the two types of existence ("in the world of Nature there is no such thing as injustice: it exists only of and between men"), he resists the lure of anthropomorphism, and is careful to mark the limits of the animals' consciousness—the she-wolf, for instance, cannot name her cubs, "but her sense of smell, which man has lost, meant that she could easily distinguish between and summon individually any of her children". The graphic descriptions of the wolves' expeditions to hunt the *saigak* (steppe antelope) are both enthralling and horrifying.

Like the *taiga*, however, the steppes suffer devasting incursions from the world of men, in the face of which the wolves must fight ever more desperately for their existence. Among the humans they encounter are Avdiy, a journalist investigating the drug-runners who gather hashish in the Moyun-Kum, and (in the second part of the book) Boston, a sheep farmer. Avdiy is a former trainee priest, expelled from his seminary for seeking his own "third truth"—in this case an alternative both to the unchanging doctrines of the Christian church, and to the scientific atheism of the Communist régime. What he demands is "a contemporary God with a new conception of the divine that is relevant to the needs of today's world"; one which takes into account the discoveries of the last 2,000 years.[3] Not surprisingly, this compromise solution does not endear him to anyone, for as the Patriarchal Co-ordinator who asks him to renounce his heresy points out, "Every ideology claims to have the last word on truth". Avdiy, however, is not the kind of man to abandon his mission, and his attempts to convert the ne'er-do-wells of the steppes lead to rejection and physical assault.

Strangely, the work which *The Place of the Skull* brings most often to mind is *Beowulf*. Although it is for the most part a Christian novel it also, like that saga, has pagan elements: at one point the she-wolf, deprived of her cubs, howls her complaint to Byuri-Ana, the goddess of wolves, and there are references throughout to the workings of fate, the Anglo-Saxon *wyrd*—"Men seek their fate, but fate

[3] See in ENCOUNTER, April 1989, Chingiz Aitmatov, "The Age of Repentance".


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seeks its man, as well . . . . Round and round life follows the pattern, fate always contriving to find its target, just as this time it darted straight and sure to the inexorable conclusion of a tale begun in another place, at another time". The gravitas of these passages and the sense of foreboding which they create are typical of *Beowulf*, as is the kind of periphrastic description which Aitmatov uses of daytime ("the sun had not yet touched the rim of the world and everything was light"); and for the most part they give *The Place of the Skull* an impressive solemnity. Occasionally the author goes too far, and his didacticism becomes pompous—for instance, when he inveighs against the sin of sloth: "You have only to look around and see the hordes of idlers and slackers everywhere—adults and youngsters, men and women . . . some people obviously do not realise what unhappiness and misery have been caused by laziness."

Where this sententiousness becomes a serious drawback is in the characterisation of Avdiy. It is, of course, notoriously difficult to create a wholly good character who is neither boring or priggish, and though Aitmatov succeeds in the first respect, he fails in the second. Part of the problem is that for Westerners hashish has become of minor concern compared to drugs like heroin, and when Avdiy refers to it as "the evil weed", and to Grishan—the leader of the runners—as "Antichrist", he seems to be over-reacting to a ridiculous degree: he is *asking* to be beaten up. His idealism may be attractive, but because he possesses neither dignity nor the ability to laugh at himself it is also embarrassing, and his callow personality makes his ideas all the harder to accept—particularly when he dares to imagine himself telling Christ where He went wrong. Boston, the shepherd, who leads a quietly virtuous life and keeps himself to himself except in the face of the most extreme provocation, is altogether more sympathetic.

Another problem is that of religious dialogue. There are three major theological debates in *The Place of the Skull*—between Avdiy and the Patriarchal Co-ordinator, between Avdiy and Grishan, and (as imagined by Avdiy) between Christ and Pontius Pilate—and of these, only the first is entirely satisfactory; the second seems contrived, and the third has some terribly awkward moments:

> "No need to be so open-handed, kind ruler, I think one execution is perfectly adequate. But let us carry on with what we were saying, although I do appreciate that the executioners waiting for me on Golgotha must be getting restless in this heat."

This is not to say that this biblical episode—or, indeed, the book as a whole—is a failure. Aitmatov's greatest gift, the ability to create a sense of place, is deployed as tellingly in his description of Jerusalem as it is in his evocation of the steppes; and it is the landscape which remains dominant at the end of this far from optimistic book. Man, *The Place of the Skull* implies, is as endangered spiritually as the wolves are physically in a world where his capacity for destruction grows ever greater, and nature—far from being a path to God as it is in *The Third Truth*—endures as an impassive backdrop to his arbitrary misfortunes.

# Anyone for President?

## *On the US Political Trail—By* BRIAN DOOLEY

IN EARLY 1942, Franklin Roosevelt wrote in a letter to Winston Churchill: "It is fun to be in the same decade with you." US involvement in World War II would assure an Allied victory, and the USA would claim unprecedented influence in the peace, becoming the original superpower. It must have been a lot of fun for the President to realise that he was the most powerful American ever.

Today, it would seem that things have changed. The US President's role is no longer all it is cracked up to be. Instead of controlling world history, international events control the President—and can bring him down. While Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy could determine the domestic policies of smaller nations, the Johnson and Carter administrations were destroyed by what once would have been regarded as minor foreign irritations. An American President simply can't compete any more with his European counterparts who are not only likely to have more experience in world affairs, but are also more likely to have the power to negotiate with other foreign powers, safe in the knowledge that any deals they make will be accepted by their parliament at home. A US President must constantly worry about majority support in Congress, and his bargaining power abroad is consequently weakened, since fellow negotiators are aware of this predicament. Moreover, since Viet Nam and Watergate, the President is less likely to carry Congress with him. Before the Tet offensive of 1968, notes Richard Rose in *The Postmodern President*,[1] "the President could expect Congress to respond compliantly to nearly half his requests. After the Tet offensive, compliant responses dropped to less than one-quarter".

A reduction in Presidential power at home obviously results in a loss of power in international matters, and America's general decline in world economic terms has also hampered recent administrations. Since the OPEC deals of

[1] *The Postmodern President: The White House Meets the World.* By RICHARD ROSE, Chatham House Publishers Inc., $17.95.

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the mid-1970s, Rose suggests, the dollar has no longer been the controlling world currency and the US economy is now very dependent upon Japan: "When a mayor thinks of money problems, he thinks only in dollars. When the President worries about money, he must also think of Deutschmarks and yen." (Sterling, it would seem, is no longer significant enough to figure in Presidential calculations.)

It might seem reasonable enough to expect the leader of the United States to understand a little of world finance, but most US Presidents, Rose claims, are simply not experienced enough to cope in world affairs. The Constitution was designed so that a President would emerge who could manage domestic issues competently. There is no built-in apprenticeship for would-be Presidents in the American system as there is, for example, in democracies like Britain and Japan.

While a British Prime Minister has invariably had years of experience in the legislature, almost always holding a Cabinet post (often as Foreign Secretary or as Chancellor of the Exchequer), US Presidents can be elected without any such "training". Since World War II, the leaders of the British Conservative and Labour Parties have enjoyed an average of 23 years each in some form of elected office, whereas Republican and Democratic Presidential candidates have had, on average, only nine years (Eisenhower had none, and Carter and Reagan eight each).

This might not matter a great deal, of course, if the United States was not important in world terms, or if it were so important and powerful that anyone of reasonable intelligence could conduct its policy without harming the country. However, America is no longer a nation set apart. It is one of a group of powerful, interdependent economies which must compete both aggressively and delicately in the world of international finance. As Rose says:

> "Knowing what will play in Paris, Illinois is no longer enough for success in the White House . . . [the President] must also win success in Paris, France. Traditional Presidents did not have to worry about the rest of the world, when America was isolationist. Modern Presidents from Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Richard M. Nixon relied upon America's military and economic preeminence to ensure that other nations followed where they led. A postmodern President's success is influenced by what governments elsewhere do, as well as by what happens in national elections in Washington."

Presidents of the 1980s and '90s should (in the words of the British Green Party) "think globally and act locally", suggests Rose. Acting locally might come naturally to a US President, whose previous political experience has been in state government, or porkbarrelling in Congress, but interfering with a delicate balance of power on the international scene is another thing.

As Congress becomes more and more belligerent towards the White House, and seeks to impose ever-increasing restraints on the executive, the President's attempts to conduct foreign affairs are made more difficult. This is no new phenomenon, of course, as President Wilson's experience with the League of Nations demonstrates, but since Johnson and Nixon pursued the Viet Nam conflict with such enthusiasm Congress has become very wary of presidential power.

In recent years, this has led to charges of partisanship, as the Democrat-controlled Congress has sought to curtail the Republican presidency. These claims have some validity although the traditional rivalry between the different branches of government is not based on party lines alone. Many of the contributors to *The Fettered Presidency*[2] fudge the distinction between the two, however, and blame Congressional hostility towards Reagan on anti-Republicanism. The book's contributors claim that the presidency has become unconstitutionally hamstrung by interfering congressmen and women, but as it is written by many former officials of the Reagan administration, with a foreword by Robert Bork, that is hardly surprising.

Had the same authors been examining eight years of a Democratic presidency battling with a Republican Congress, they might have drawn slightly different conclusions about the enfeeblement of the White House. Nevertheless, there is much valuable comment in *The Fettered Presidency*, including a thorough analysis of the War Powers Act, passed in 1973 in response to what Congress regarded as Presidential excesses in conducting the war in Viet Nam. Caspar Weinberger argues that the resolution is "unconstitutional" and interferes with the Presidential duties as Commander-in-Chief of the US military. Under the War Powers Act, troops which have been sent to a war zone by the President can only remain with Congressional approval. If the approval is not given, the troops must return. In practice, however, Congress has not been eager to enforce the resolution, and anyway, all that it could do would be to instruct the President to withdraw the troops. They would not actually be withdrawn until he gave the order.

Although the contributors to *The Fettered Presidency* make their points eloquently and often seductively, their complaints about the erosion of presidential authority are not so persuasive in the light of the Iran-Contra affair. One of them dismisses the crime as an incident when "some NSC

[2] *The Fettered Presidency: Legal Constraints on the Executive Branch.* Edited by L. Gordon Crovitz and Jeremy A. Rabkin. American Enterprise Institute, $29.95; paper $14.95.

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staff may have skirted the edge of the law". Others claim that the media is determined to find scandals in a Republican Presidency—not an unreasonable aim for reporters who have uncovered the arms-to-Iran deal and Watergate. In reality however, there is no special animosity towards the White House, and politicians of all levels are subjected to personal scrutiny, as Democrats Thomas Eagleton and Gary Hart could testify.

MUCH OF the current debate over Congressional power versus executive privilege is a result of the Watergate years. Johnson, too, contributed to the White House "credibility gap", but while the system could have withstood the damage done by his administration, Watergate was a different matter.

Nixon's fight with the media, with Congress, with himself, is full of bitterness and tragedy. Presidents throughout history have, no doubt, all wished they had more power over Congress and the media, but the Nixon experience went much further. *From: The President,* a collection of White House memos from the Nixon administration, makes fascinating reading.[3]

Apart from retailing fairly amusing Presidential gossip (Nixon reminds his daughters that he used to sing *Happy Birthday* to them on their birthdays, and they should remember to tell reporters so, to make the President seem like a regular "Pops"), the memos reveal a disdain for congressmen and women from both parties. In the run-up to the 1972 re-election campaign, Nixon's top aide, H. R. "Bob" Haldeman confirms that

> ". . . as far as the President's time is concerned there will be no appearances with other candidates unless that helps us. There will be no effort to get Senate seats and so forth . . . ."

If Nixon couldn't be bothered to campaign for a Congressional majority, he could hardly complain later that he was a victim of party politics. The files also show just how much time and effort an incumbent President can spend on re-election. The White House staff considers setting up a letter-writing campaign to have Nixon nominated as the *Time* "Man of the Year", and is forever drawing up blacklists of unfriendly journalists, and dreaming up ways of discrediting George McGovern (Pat Buchanan to Nixon, 8 June 1972: "This fellow Mott, who bankrolls McGovern, is, I understand, a screaming fairy . . .").

However, it would be unwise to criticise Nixon's election strategies too much, as he was the most successful Presidential election contestant in US history, winning four (1952 and '56 as Vice-President, 1968 and '72 as President) and losing one (very narrowly, to Kennedy in 1960). Nixon is not usually credited with exploiting television to good effect in his victories, and his 1960 defeat is often blamed on his shabby appearance during the famous debates with Kennedy. However, he rescued his political career and his place in the

[3] *From: The President. Richard Nixon's Secret Files.* Edited by BRUCE OUDES. André Deutsch, £15.95.


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White House years before that in his "Checkers" speech, and was one of the first politicians of his generation to understand what power the medium of television had.

In an excellent book on modern-day campaigning, *Candidates, Consultants and Campaigns*,[4] Frank Luntz punctures many common myths about the use of television, the cost of campaigns, and the work of paid consultants. It is impossible, he suggests, to over-emphasise the importance of television in a campaign. Not necessarily because people are persuaded by the ads a candidate puts out, but because without it the rest of the press won't take the campaign seriously. Paid consultants, it seems, are not hired guns who would swap candidates at the drop of a fat contract. Most consultant firms have an ideological leaning towards one party. "We're in politics to make a difference", said one consultant. Nevertheless, they are expensive, and the complicated laws on funding a campaign have only made them all the more valuable. In the old days, when the rules were simpler and more often ignored, a campaign's finances would more or less take care of themselves. Now, specialist accountants need to be employed to ensure that all the money offered to the candidate's efforts is channelled through the proper procedures.

Raising money has become the major priority of candidates. For incumbents and challengers alike, campaigning simply means fund-raising. Although there is no limit to how much candidates can contribute to their own campaigns out of private funds (favouring millionaires), the rest has to be painstakingly collected in a series of small amounts at fund-raising events. "The price for running for the Senate today", said the 1986 Missouri Senate candidate Harriet Woods, "is spending more time than you'd like to spend asking people for more money than they'd like to give." Senator Barry Goldwater claimed that the prospect of tedious fund-raising was the primary reason why he decided not to seek re-election.

Luntz estimates the cost of running a statewide Californian campaign at one million dollars in consultants' fees alone. Raising money through hi-tech is no longer a science but an art. Some consultants favour sending potential donors a Federal Express overnight package with a copy of an ad their candidate would like to run, details about how much it costs, and a request that a cheque be sent at once. In a country where people list "opening the mail" as their most pleasurable daily activity, campaigning by post has obvious advantages. Brad O'Leary, a professional consultant who worked for Jack Kemp's presidential bid, favours sending supporters an invoice. The recipient is told that he owes a certain amount of money to the campaign and is instructed, not asked, to forward that amount immediately. "A whole lot of people will bitch like crazy that you sent them an invoice", says O'Leary, but "You'll also get twice as much money as you would get in a normal mailing."

ANOTHER controversial tactic is the negative ad. This is not a modern invention, but is a long-established tradition of American politics. Luntz reminds us that in the first contested Presidential elections, "Federalists branded Thomas Jefferson an anarchist, an atheist and a coward . . . ." Many of the electorate complain about attacks on candidates, and the consultants claim they would prefer not to have to run them, but everyone agrees that they are very effective. The most vicious attacks are usually at local level, where policies do not separate the candidates. In fact, most of the innovative advertising is done on a statewide scale, and what is often regarded as a "new" strategy in a Presidential race is simply something copied from a successful local campaign.

The biggest change in recent years has not been the content of television ads, or even their computer-graphics, but their frequency. Ads are shorter and are aired more often. In the 1986 North Carolina Senate race, each of the two main candidates averaged 25 television ads a day throughout the campaign. These developments are no bad thing for a healthy democracy. Serious issues cannot be effectively dealt with in 15-second sound bites, but better this than not being aired at all.

Far from being cynical mercenaries, however, the new breed of consultants is fast becoming the saviour of the old party system. Candidates who cannot afford the hefty fees charged by television or fund-raising specialists are now supplied with specialists employed by their party. In fact, candidates are beginning to rely once more on party support to win elections, as the computer expert takes the place of the old boss in his knowledge of a particular constituency (not of a geographical constituency, like the old-time bosses, but a constituency based on a particular class or religious group, which the technology specialist can reach via highly-accurate direct mail tactics).

If the role of the Presidency has changed since the decade when Roosevelt was in the White House, at least campaigning can still be fun.

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[4] *Candidates, Consultants and Campaigns*. By FRANK LUNTZ. Blackwell, £19.95.

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# Books Encountered

**The Pleasures of Peace: Art and imagination in Post-War Britain.** By BRIAN APPLEYARD. Faber, £12.99.

Fascinating, polymath, but ultimately unsatisfying *aperçus* of the various arts in Britain from cloth waistcoats to designer jeans. The essays, each centring on a school, a trend, or a person, resemble the "middle" articles from 1930s weeklies (e.g. "Books in General" in the *New Statesman*). I.e., not quite enough said.

**Man/Woman: The One is the Other.** By ELIZABETH BADINTER. Translated by BARBARA WRIGHT. Collins Harvill, £13.00.

Superb translation: provocative book. It falls short of substantiating its subtitle, but argues that sexual stereotypes are converging as women grow more "masterful", men more "feminine". Sure, genders overlap, and there may one day be reproductive role-swapping. But macho brutes and shrinking violets linger outside Paris, London, and New York.

**Comics: Ideology, Power and the Critics.** By MARTIN BARKER. Manchester University Press, £40.00, paper £10.95.

This looks at first like the Popular Culture lampooned by *M*'s Philip Marlowe "Column" in the last issue. In fact, it's clear and vigorous, sharply argumentative, heterodox, and—leaving aside some anti-Thatcher knee-jerks—scrupulously fair. Unlike some "analysts", Barker has done his homework . . . .

**The Culture We Deserve.** By JACQUES BARZUN. Wesleyan University Press, $19.95, £15,00.

Twelve pained, elegant essays deploring today's blend of popular superficiality and academic obscurantism, in unholy alliance to starve and defraud, leaving culture prone to charlatans and hype. Amid handbooks, lists, and Critical Theory, words are misused, history is perverted, common readers are lost. Banzai, Barzun.

**Osbert: A Portrait of Osbert Lancaster.** By RICHARD BOSTON. Collins, £17.50.

Affectionate, well-documented, crisply-written biography of the caricaturist, architectural historian, stage designer, diplomat, wit, clubman, and (most famously) "pocket cartoonist" on the *Daily Express* who invented Maudie Littlehampton—that imperious memsahib worthy of of Evelyn Waugh. Like Waugh, Sir Osbert relished playing himself. The illustrations alone are worth the price.

**Namier.** By LINDA COLLEY. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95, paper £5.95.

Ludwik Bernsztajn vel Niemirowski was perhaps a name to conjure with; but its naturalised version Lewis Bernstein Namier became one to swear by, and adopt into the *OED* to denote his close analysis of society. But, as Professor Colley shows in this fine example of the "Historians on Historians" series, Namier did much more—though too many of his papers are now lost.

**When I Was: A Memoir of the Years Between the Wars.** By Desmond Hawkins. Macmillan, £14.95.

"A tweedy figure in a porkpie hat"—Dylan Thomas; "needed only a bronze helmet"—Frieda Lawrence; "he liked to talk about cheese"—T. S. Eliot. Such glimpses are only a part of this rather poignant memoir of a young literato, who later founded the BBC's Natural History Unit. Nostalgic footnotes, in sepia.

**Lydia and Maynard: The Letters of Lydia Lopokova and John Maynard Keynes.** Edited by POLLY HILL and RICHARD KEYNES. André Deutsch, £17.95.

Surprisingly tender and unembarrassing letters, mostly from Lydia to Keynes, written from before the beginning of their love affair (1921) until their marriage in 1925. She was leaving Diaghilev's company and a failed marriage; he was turning away from male partners to a love which Bloomsbury derided in vain. Her spelling is a delight.

**Architect of European Unity; Memoirs 1911-1986.** By ROBERT MARJOLIN. Translated by WILLIAM HILL. Foreword by ERIC ROLL. Preface by RAYMOND BARRE. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £18.50.

"Works superintendent" might be closer than "architect", which really fits Jean Monnet. In French, this modest, frank, dazzlingly intelligent, and charming book was better entitled *Le travail d'une vie*. Indispensable for study of the period (especially of the now neglected OEEC), it also reveals a shy, scrupulous idealist. His notes for the Conclusion he died before writing include: "I started very low; I climbed very high (or fairly high) . . . . For a time I felt very proud of my achievement. Now I don't know."

**Hume.** By NICHOLAS PHILLIPSON. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95, paper £5.95.

Another winner in the "Historians on Historians" series, reminding us that David Hume was much more than the philosopher who queried whether the sun would rise tomorrow. Sadly, he omits the opening words of Hume's *My Own Life:* "It is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity; therefore I shall be short." Otherwise, admirable.

**Planned to Death: the Annihilation of a Place Called Howdendyke.** By J. DOUGLAS PORTEOUS. Manchester University Press, £35.00.

". . . all that remains / For us will be concrete and tyres." Philip Larkin's poem "Going, going" aptly prefaces this meticulous account of how a Humberside village is being bulldozed, against its inhabitants' wishes, to make way for expanding industry. The culprits: greed, politicians, defective planning. Romania, here we come.

**Nineteen Eighty-Four: Past, Present, and Future.** By PATRICK REILLY. Twayne Publishers, $18.95, paper $7.95.

Close moral analysis of Orwell's novel, comparing it with Swift and calling it "a modern rendition [*sic*], chillingly modified, of that basic myth of Western culture, Jack the Giant-killer". The ending, Reilly argues, is neither paralysingly pessimistic nor mockingly sardonic: its purpose is exemplary, a revivifying cautionary tale.

**Spy Shadow.** By TIM SEBASTIAN. Simon & Schuster, £11.95.

"Get in there, they had said to Tristram. Get in there and see what moves." Yes, a second deadpan, expert espionage extravaganza from the BBC's former Poland and Moscow correspondent, as effectively done as *The Spy in Question*, and an interesting companion-read to John le Carré's *The Russia House*.

**Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France.** By RICHARD D. SONN. University of Nebraska Press, £26.95, $35,00.

The aim of this thesis, originally doctoral, is to rehabilitate anarchism from its Conrad, beards-and-bombs, image and show it as a coherent philosophy and sub-culture. It only partly succeeds, often by roping in cognate movements and citing Courbet, Proudhon, Mallarmé, Zola, etc., to establish innocence-by-association.

**Congenial Spirits: The Selected Letters of Virginia Woolf.** Edited by JOANNE TRAUTMANN BANKS. Hogarth Press, £18.50.

Twelve "new" letters are included in this sparkling, gossipy anthology, culled from the six-volume edition and far more manageable for anyone not inexhaustibly interested in Bloomsbury. There are several catty references to Lydia Lopokova (see above).

*R.M.*

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# The Rose Garden & the East Wind

## *Franco-German Relations—By* MICHAEL SUTTON

FOR CHARLES DE GAULLE, the Rhine was the geographical *leitmotif* of Franco-German cooperation, and the predominant historical allusion was to the Carolingian period. His first and crucial meeting with Konrad Adenauer took place in 1958 at his home in Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises, a small village in the eastern marches of Champagne, close to Lorraine. Half a year before the signing of the Elysée Treaty of Franco-German Cooperation in January 1963, the two men were to kneel together in Rheims Cathedral, whose High Gothic glory had suffered so grievously from German artillery fire in World War I.

In the case of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt, the symbolically charged meeting took place in 1978 in Aachen, as they prepared the final shape of the European Monetary System—the two men together visited Charlemagne's throne in the Cathedral, and also attended a concert there. A comparably climactic moment for François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl came in 1984 as they held hands in silence on the battlefield of Verdun.

Both France and the Federal Republic of Germany have seen in these events a real continuity in terms of political gesture. However, since the early 1980s, the virtualities of the Franco-German alliance have lessened in their relative importance for Bonn. First, as the privileged relation embodied in the Schmidt-Giscard partnership came to an end, with Britain's presence more strongly asserted in Europe, there was no longer the same scope for a Franco-German directory at European Community level. Then, from the middle of the decade, as Bonn looked increasingly eastwards with a reinvigorated *Ostpolitik*, attention became—figuratively speaking—more focused on the Elbe than on the Rhine.

The salient developments need be only briefly mentioned: Mikhail Gorbachov's accession to power in the Soviet Union in 1985; then the dramatic push for reform to save Communist Europe's tottering economies and discredited régimes; and, in response to the reform effort's elements of liberalisation, a certain readjustment of the Federal Republic's diplomatic and foreign trade policies. Much of the initiative here came from the Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher—and, quite separately, from the late Franz Josef Strauss, who was quick to perceive some of the opportunities afforded. It is especially this new German interest in the political and economic changes occurring in the Soviet Union and Central Europe that has led to a relative depreciation of the alliance which was sealed in 1963 on the French side by de Gaulle and—an apparent paradox for some—largely prepared more than ten years earlier by Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman.

The Federal Republic's policy readjustment has now, of course, been extended to Defence matters—witness the controversial proposal, in April this year, to open early negotiations with the Soviet Union for the reduction or even (perhaps) the total elimination of short-range nuclear weapons in Europe. That "third zero option", bringing about a denuclearised Europe, would mark the final abandoning of NATO's doctrine of flexible response. President Mitterrand, however, has made it clear that France has no more intention of relinquishing its very short-range nuclear weapons than it has of discarding its strategic ones (a point he insisted upon in a Defence policy address to the Institut des Hautes Études de Défense Nationale in October 1988 and at his major press conference in May this year).

On this fundamental issue, French and British thinking are at one. Instead, it is the French President's much vaunted Franco-German military cooperation which risks running into difficulties. It may well be gratifying to have formed a Franco-German army brigade (the linguistic problems notwithstanding), and to be engaged jointly in the development of a new anti-tank combat helicopter; but these are tokens whose significance would be greatly reduced by the emergence of any radical differences in the Defence policies of France and the Federal Republic.

THE FIRST VICISSITUDE suffered by the 1963 Franco-German Elysée Treaty was its partial emasculation at the hands of the *Bundestag*. Thus it was ratified several months after its signature, but only after the West German Parliament had added a preamble that deprived it of much of its original force as the affirmation of a very privileged relationship. Willy Brandt, then Mayor of Berlin, had been warned by de Gaulle beforehand that he would take this preamble as a personal insult. It was a warning to no avail.

Reacting to the *Bundestag*'s move, de Gaulle wryly



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remarked that the life of a treaty could be as transitory as the beauty of a young woman or a rose, and he added—quoting Victor Hugo—*"Hélas! Que j'en ai vu mourir de jeunes filles."* A grower and connoisseur of roses, Adenauer responded in kind. Whatever the ephemeral quality of a young woman's beauty, he said, the roses in his own garden at Rhöndorf were hardy and survived the winters; this would be the case with Franco-German friendship. Yes, admitted de Gaulle, their treaty did resemble a rose garden rather than the passing beauty of a single rose.[1]

If the simile is transferred to the two countries' present "network of preferential links"—to borrow de Gaulle's phrase from his *Mémoires d'espoir*—how cold does the east wind now blow?

LET THERE BE no exaggeration: Franco-German co-operation is far from dead. Yet the close community of interests that has governed many of the two countries' policies during the past 40 years has weakened of late, and may weaken still further. The Federal Republic is not on a new path to Rapallo; but, to the extent that it loosens its ties with the United States and with the Atlantic Alliance, it is also partly loosening them with France and with the thinking that gave rise to Western European unification in the Adenauer years.

Viewed from the French standpoint, there can be little doubt that the changes under way are important ones. Some of them are prejudicial to perceived national interests as framed in policy-making ever since the early 1950s. For, in matters of Franco-German reconciliation and cooperation, there has been more continuity between the Fourth and Fifth Republics than is often supposed.

To see this continuity in perspective, there should be no misunderstanding about the origin of the Monnet-inspired Schuman Declaration of May 1950, which led in the following year to the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community. The *MRP*—the Fourth Republic's Christian Democrat party—provided the Quai d'Orsay with its Foreign Minister from 1944 continuously through to 1954 (in the person of Georges Bidault until mid-1948, then Schuman for more than four years until the end of 1952, and finally Bidault again until the formation of the Mendès France government). But the famous Declaration was in no way the expression of any supposed Roman Catholic political clericalism, that is to say of an ambition to create a bloc of largely Catholic nations in Western Europe. As a recent history of Christian Democracy in France stresses,[2] the *MRP*'s ardent European commitment was a tardy development; indeed, it followed the Schuman Declaration rather than prepared it.

The Declaration itself was very much a fortuitous affair. Its basic proposal—a pooling of France's and Germany's coal and steel resources in a new organisation, which would be open also to other European countries—had been conceived by Jean Monnet (at the time *Commissaire-Général du Plan),* but the putting of the original idea into a credible institutional form from the standpoint of international law was due to Jean Monnet's chance meeting in April 1950 with a well-disposed university jurist, Paul Reuter. It was almost by accident that Schuman used the proposal a month later.

In general, it was more the result of the pressure of external events than of any long-considered strategy that, at the beginning of the 1950s, France embraced the cause of Franco-German reconciliation and a measure of Western European unification. Real consistency of view about what was politically desirable in Western Europe had come from the United States, with first General Marshall as Secretary of State and then Dean Acheson. The Schuman Declaration happened to fit well into American designs. Moreover, even before its adoption by the French Council of Ministers as effectively the Schuman Plan, it had received the glad blessing of Konrad Adenauer. He was to be forever grateful to Monnet and Schuman for creating a new form of European organisation that allowed the Federal Republic to be integrated, so quickly and on an equal footing, into the post-War concert of Western European states. And he was to attach the same instrumental value to the European Economic Community. Thus the West German Chancellor's stance was straightforward.

On the French side, however, there was from the start a certain ambiguity. During the 1950s—the crucial decade—there were signs of a genuine wish for Franco-German reconciliation for its own sake and, related to this, France's pursuit of Western European unification could be conceived as partly the affirmation of a moral vision. In political terms, however, unification was frequently construed as a way of bridling Germany; the evident desire was to lock the Federal Republic into a radically new type of alliance under which it would be precluded from threatening future harm. This ambiguity of purpose marked the setting up of the Coal and Steel Community as well as the fiasco of the European Defence Community.

LAST YEAR SAW the publication of a number of autobiographical works which are of interest in this respect. From an historical standpoint, the weightiest may be judged to be the further volumes of Michel Debré's memoirs, with the second covering the Fourth Republic years—when he represented the Gaullist cause in the Senate—and the third describing 1958-62, his period as Prime Minister.[3]

Also of some note are the memoirs of Debré's Resistance companion, Pierre-Henri Teitgen, who served in 1944-46 successively as de Gaulle's Minister of Information and Minister of Justice, and later as an occasional government minister under the Fourth Republic, while playing a prominent role as a leader of the *MRP* throughout the 1944-58

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[1] See Jean Lacouture, *de Gaulle,* vol. 3: *Le souverain* (1986).

[2] *Histoire de la démocratie chrétienne en France: de Chateaubriand à Raymond Barre.* By FRANÇOIS-GEORGES DREYFUS. Albin Michel, FF 150.

[3] *Trois républiques pour une France.* Vol. 2. *Mémoires: 1946-58—agir.* Vol. 3. *Mémoires: 1958-62—gouverner.* By MICHEL DEBRÉ. Albin Michel, FF 150 each.

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period.[4] Lastly, there is the autobiography of Etienne Hirsch, who was a close collaborator of Monnet from 1943 onwards, his successor as *Commissaire-Général du Plan* in 1952, and subsequently (1959-61) President of the Commission of Euratom.[5]

Taken together, these new autobiographical works throw some additional light on the hesitations, mixed feelings, or contradictory motives of many of the Fourth Republic's politicians towards Franco-German reconciliation and European cooperation or unification (as witness, for example, the stance of Pierre Mendès France). They also reinforce the view that, from the end of the 1940s, de Gaulle was as committed to these aims as many of his Fourth Republic contemporaries and often with less ambiguity.

Commenting on de Gaulle's readiness in 1958 to respect the Treaties of Paris and Rome, which set up the three European Communities, Raymond Aron wrote that "*die List der Vernunft* was favourable to us: the General would not have signed the treaties; while the Fourth Republic would probably have been unable to apply them."[6] This is a reasonable judgement. However, it does not alter the fact that the design of the European Economic Community, as laid down by the Treaty of Rome and supplemented by additional agreements on agriculture and the common external tariff, well suited de Gaulle's long-term purposes. He was not obliged to subscribe to the credo of European federalism, but could attach importance to European economic integration.

BOTH TEITGEN AND HIRSCH point to the emotional dimension of their commitment to strive for improved Franco-German relations and, around this axis, for wider European unity. Teitgen recalls seeing *Nuit et brouillard* (Alain Resnais's documentary on Nazi concentration camps) at a Strasbourg cinema in the company of other Council of Europe parliamentarians, at the formal invitation of none other than Chancellor Adenauer. The Frenchman's initial reaction was to protest vigorously to Heinrich von Brentano, the German Foreign Minister, at the incongruity of the invitation but eventually he complied and left the cinema at von Brentano's side, moved by the film but also by the German government's penitential act. And Hirsch poignantly describes how difficult it was for him to overcome personal feelings and work for a new understanding with Germany. Himself partly of German and Austro-Hungarian Jewish origin (and distantly related to Arthur Koestler), he had lost many close relations and friends in the convoys that moved eastwards from Drancy between 1942 and 1944—including his parents, only three weeks before the liberation of Paris.

Hirsch through his important role in the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community and Teitgen through active involvement in the Council of Europe (whose European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights he had played a major part in drafting) gave active proof of their resolution to help forge a better Europe. For both of them, it was largely because of their experience of the war years.

ALMOST PROVOCATIVELY, Teitgen suggests that de Gaulle at the time of the Schuman Declaration was not far removed in spirit. For proof, he quotes from a declaration at a press conference in August 1950, in which de Gaulle called for a more ambitious European organisation than that represented by the recently founded Council of Europe. It was to be based on a "Franco-German *entente* of a practical kind" since, in continental Europe, such an *entente* afforded "real strategic and economic opportunities". Furthermore, declared de Gaulle, there should be "European institutions founded on the direct vote of Europe's citizens, with a partial devolution of sovereignty from member states in the economic and defence spheres" as well as a "common defence system".

Admittedly, this declaration by de Gaulle was made in the context of the German rearmament question, and contained an explicit and quixotic bid for France to become the allied powers' *primus inter pares* in Western Europe. But then attempts to consolidate France's position and to ensure that West Germany was kept under proper control through binding institutional arrangements were typical of the whole period.

Thus, when Monnet was preparing the proposals that were to be the basis of the Schuman Declaration, he was primarily seeking to guarantee France's security and to allay fears of a revival of German nationalism. The Federal Republic's economic recovery was already impressive, and Bonn was requesting permission from the Allies to be allowed to increase its steel production by more than a quarter. To this request, the Americans were ready to assent, but the French were adamantly opposed. Coke production in the Ruhr was tending to be almost exclusively directed towards serving the needs of West Germany's domestic steel producers. And renewed German efficiency pointed to dangers for France which Monnet summarily noted in his memoirs:

> ". . . Germany expanding; German dumping on export markets; a call for the protection of French industry; an end to trade liberalisation; the re-establishment of pre-War cartels; perhaps, Eastward outlets for German expansion, a prelude to political agreements; and France back in the old rut of limited, protected production."[7]

What became the Schuman Plan started, according to Monnet, as an attempt to "solve the German problem", not by accepting the rules of the game as given but by modifying the rules themselves. In the spring of 1950, confronted by a French parliament hostile to any increase in German economic power and by a United States resolved to promote the young Federal Republic's well-being, Schuman found himself in an invidious position. Monnet's proposals proved a godsend. But even after they were adopted by the French

[4] *"Faites entrer le témoin suivant": 1940-1958, de la Résistance à la V^e République*. By PIERRE-HENRI TEITGEN. Ouest France (Rennes), FF 100.

[5] *Ainsi va la vie*. By ETIENNE HIRSCH. Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe et Centre de recherches européennes (Lausanne), SF 60.

[6] Raymond Aron, *Mémoires* (1986).

[7] Jean Monnet, *Mémoires* (1976).

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Government, official attitudes in Paris often remained begrudging. Hirsch, for example, tells of his being convoked later in 1950 by René Pleven, who had taken office in July as Prime Minister: "I understand", said Pleven, "why coal is being shared, since we are short of it. But why are we sharing the iron ore that we ourselves possess?" This was no Gaullist who spoke in such terms but one of Monnet's wartime collaborators and friends, for whom the accolade "good European" would later appear quite fitting.

PLEVEN, OF COURSE, was to lend his name to the plan for a European Defence Community. The idea, however, was Monnet's; and it was essentially an extension of the Schuman Plan to the sphere of Defence. Adopted by the Council of Ministers in October 1950 and approved by a large majority in the National Assembly, the Pleven Plan was the French Government's response to the United States' insistence, as the Korean War gathered pace, that the Federal Republic should contribute militarily to the security of Western Europe. Dean Acheson had taken the position that any substantial increase in the strength of US ground forces in Europe, to meet the heightened Soviet threat, must be matched not only by major increases in French forces and in British troops on the continent, but also by the insertion into NATO of West German army contingents at divisional level (without the creation of a German General Staff). The Monnet-Pleven counterproposal was for the creation of a European army, whose framework would be a European Defence Community modelled on the Coal and Steel Community, and whose national contingents would be incorporated at the level of "the smallest possible unit" (this being understood initially as battalion level).

Monnet feared that the American proposals would quickly lead to the reconstruction of the *Wehrmacht*, and that this in turn would so satisfy German aspirations for duly recognised statehood that Bonn would lose all appetite for his type of European unification. This fear, he related in his memoirs, he expressed to Schuman in September 1950, as tensions grew between France and the United States:

> "If the Germans get what the Schuman Plan offers them, but without the Plan itself, we shall run the risk of their turning their backs on us. If they were rearmed on a national basis, and thereby recovered their freedom of action, they would be able—and tempted—to strike a balance between East and West."

The Pleven Plan was to degenerate into a near farce, one that dragged on until August 1954 when the National Assembly failed to ratify the European Defence Community treaty signed two years earlier. Alone among the six signatories, France refused what it had itself proposed.

It was Anthony Eden who picked up the pieces. As a result of the international conference which the British Foreign Secretary organised in London a month later, and with Mendès France cooperating, the Federal Republic was brought militarily into NATO, and became party (with Italy) to the Brussels Defence Treaty of 1948. The Western European Union had been established. As Michel Debré justly remarks in his memoirs, the wheel had turned full circle: France, in short, had come to accept the substance of what had been proposed on the American side four years earlier.

In Debré's account of European affairs in the 1946-62 period, his chapter of nearly 100 pages on the abortive Defence Community merits attention. In particular, it highlights the confusion in which the Pleven Plan was launched, and the bitterness to which the EDC later gave rise in French society (a new Dreyfus Affair, Debré cried, stirring up trouble at the time).

His "combat against the EDC", however, was accompanied by a relatively positive attitude towards West Germany. Thus Debré remarks that as early as 1947 he was submitting memoranda to de Gaulle in which he advocated European cooperation based on an "*entente* with the new Germany". And in 1949 he caused some scandal in the Senate by calling for German membership of the future Council of Europe. As for German rearmament, there is the claim to have advocated a consistent policy over a long period: essentially that the Federal Republic should be integrated militarily into NATO under certain restrictions (notably in respect of nuclear weapons), and that not only France and Germany but also Britain should closely cooperate in Defence matters. In the Senate, where he headed the Gaullist parliamentary group, Debré therefore gave his approval to the accords signed in Paris in October 1954, following the successful London conference.

He describes in his memoirs his total opposition to the creation of Euratom but also his adoption of a more nuanced attitude to the European Economic Community. The economic liberalism inspiring much of the Treaty of Rome had for him at least the virtue of being at odds with the protectionism that had done so much harm to French industry. None the less, Debré's overall judgment in 1957 was negative: the Treaty's fundamental fault was its institutionalised supranationalism, its provisions regarding agriculture were too vague, and anyway France was not sufficiently prepared for it.

DE GAULLE'S FUTURE Prime Minister was not alone. When the Spaak Report—which laid the ground for the Treaty of Rome—had appeared in April 1956, there had been no great enthusiasm for it in French official circles. Indeed, in the months that followed, many of France's leading civil servants were outrightly hostile. And the respected Pierre Mendès-France could say at the time of the Treaty's ratification that "to decide to enter the Common Market in the near future amounts to formally accepting German hegemony".

Guy Mollet was Prime Minister from February 1956 to June 1957, that is to say during the crucial period encompassing the publication of the Spaak Report, the initially negative French reaction to it, and—despite this—the eventual decision to draw up the Treaty of Rome. What particularly emboldened Mollet was the desire to push quickly into the shadows the humiliation of November 1956, that of the Suez Crisis with its bitter climb-down.

Similarly, the Algerian Crisis was to prompt de Gaulle to think more intensely of Europe. He informed his Council of Ministers in March 1961, shortly after the announcement of

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the Evian Talks, that France's "era of empire" had effectively been a consolation for the Second Treaty of Paris of 1815 and the Treaty of Frankfurt of 1871, but that this era was now over. French withdrawal from North Africa was thus the other side of the coin to the Gaullist-inspired Fouchet Plan for a confederal Europe (1961-62) and the signing of the Elysée Treaty in 1963. In a new Europe, marked by changed Franco-German relations, the Algerian trauma was to be gradually forgotten.

THE LANDMARK developments for Franco-German relations a generation or more ago were clearly the Schuman Plan, the Paris accords of 1954, the Treaty of Rome instituting the European Economic Community and, finally, the Elysée Treaty. For most of the time since then, there have been a number of constants in French government attitudes to the nature and advantages of the special relationship.

On the economic front, there has been a constant concern to keep in step with Western Europe's strongest economy, and to be braced by competition with it. General de Gaulle, like Michel Debré and above all Jean Monnet, felt that the French economy was in need of radical reinvigoration. Hence his *"résolution de pratiquer le Marché commun"*. Not even the Socialists in 1981-82 were to dissent to this. According to the late Robert Marjolin, who was one of the most perceptive observers of Europe's post-War recovery and has left us with one of the best accounts of France's entry into the European Economic Community, this resolution was well-founded: not only did it lead to the near elimination of the previously existing economic gap between France and West Germany, but "it was France of all the countries of the Community which benefited the most from the trade liberalisation prescribed by the Treaty of Rome or indirectly resulting from it".[8]

In the second half of the 1970s, when President Giscard d'Estaing joined forces with Chancellor Schmidt to set up the European Monetary System, his avowed aim was to consolidate France's position as the fourth of the world's leading economic powers and the second European one, and then to have France catch up in economic strength with West Germany in the space of some fifteen years.[9]

The same policy of assuring the strength of the French economy—through pegging the franc to the Deutschmark in the EMS exchange-rate mechanism—was a central issue in the economic policy debate that accompanied the Socialists' radical revision of ideas during 1982-83. The advocates for maintaining the link were Jacques Delors and Pierre Mauroy—then respectively Finance Minister and Prime Minister—while their opponents were two of President Mitterrand's confidants at the Elysée: the late Jean Riboud, head of the Schlumberger group, and Pierre Bérégovoy. It was only the brandishing of the spectre of interest rates over 20% by Michel Camdessus—Governor of the Bank of France and now Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund—that reportedly saved the day for Delors and Mauroy.[10] Since March 1983 there has been little questioning of the commitment to the EMS/Deutschmark link.

IN THE MATTER OF Defence, the constant of the past 35 years may be simply described as France's interest in keeping the Federal Republic firmly anchored to the Atlantic Alliance—notwithstanding French withdrawal in 1966 from NATO's integrated military command. Notable in this respect were, first, de Gaulle's intransigence about the status of Berlin throughout the long-running crisis provoked by Khrushchev in November 1958, which led in August 1961 to the construction of the Berlin Wall (a crisis during which de Gaulle was haunted by fears of Germany's neutralisation); and, secondly, Mitterrand's decisive support of Chancellor Kohl in January 1983, over the installation on German soil of *Pershing-2* missiles.

France's refusal to be party to NATO's integrated military command combined with repeated declarations of fealty to the Atlantic Alliance sometimes appears an almost schizophrenic burlesque, which can be indulged in only because of the knowledge that West Germany remains in any case reasonably well protected by France's NATO partners. The reality is that France has become accustomed to entering NATO's military command structure through the back door. Here lies the substance of much Franco-German military cooperation. In November 1988, for instance, one of France's leading Defence commentators, Jacques Isnard, interviewed General von Sandrart—the Commander in Chief of Allied Forces Central Europe (that is to say, NATO forces in the Federal Republic and the Benelux countries). Commenting on the cooperation of France's First Army and Rapid Action Force (*FAR*) with the NATO forces under his command, the General made it quite clear that cooperation was not only considerable, but of an increasingly closer kind.[11]

WHAT THEN HAS CHANGED of late? In the area of Defence, it is more a threat of change than change itself. However, in the area of economic policy, some lessening in the complementarity of national interests is already there to see.

As regards Defence, Hans-Dietrich Genscher has denied being a closet protagonist of "the third zero option". Yet he has risked playing the sorcerer's apprentice. The ques-

[8] Robert Marjolin, *Le travail d'une vie: mémoires, 1911-86* (1986).
[9] TF1 interview with Jean-Louis Servan-Schreiber (*Le Monde*, 18 October 1978).
[10] See Philippe Bauchard, *La guerre des deux roses: du rêve à la réalité, 1981-1985* (1986).
[11] See *Le Monde*, 24 November 1988. Not surprisingly, this closer cooperation has had little to do with the Franco-German brigade (which in April 1989 was judged to be still of "low military value" by a five-man mission from the French Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee). Of recent note is that France has decided to seek participation in NATO's Air Control and Communication System (ACCS), an ambitious and very costly electronic air-defence network and battle-management system upon which work is due to begin in 1991 and which may take some twenty years to complete.

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tion of modernising NATO's short-range nuclear weapons—above all, replacement of the *Lance* missile—may not call for immediate planning decisions, but the issue in terms of military strategy appears clear-cut. If the West German federal election of December 1990 results in a government adamantly opposed to the presence of any nuclear weapons on German soil, France's confidence about the Federal Republic remaining anchored to the Atlantic Alliance would certainly take a tumble. Only a prompt and positive Soviet response to President Bush's May 1989 proposals for conventional arms reductions—involving cuts so deep in Warsaw Pact forces that there would be real equality of conventional forces in Europe—could bring reassurance.

Equally, a Bonn government committed to total denuclearisation of defence would find it difficult to give even tacit support to France's policy of nuclear deterrence—whatever President Mitterrand may say about France's not limiting defence of its "vital interest" to protection of its national territory. It would, moreover, be impossible for France to put the emphasis on Franco-German military cooperation, which it has done in recent years, if the Federal Republic were noticeably less keen to be an active player. Finally, any idea that a revitalised Western European Union could be developed into the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance would be gravely compromised by any West German lurch towards neutralism.

IN THE AREA OF economic policy, a lessening in the complementarity of national interests may be observed on three fronts: the direction of trade; tax harmonisation in the framework of the European Community's single market programme; and—*pace* President Mitterand's views—European monetary integration.

As regards the direction of trade, there is little doubt that West Germany is well poised to make substantial gains from changed Soviet economic policies, and in particular from the efforts that are being undertaken by way of *perestroika* to modernise industrial plant and equipment and to promote joint ventures. In 1988, the DM value of West German exports to the Soviet Union increased by 20%, while the year-on-year increase in the first four months of 1989 was as much as 30%. Admittedly, the Soviet market is still a small one from the West German standpoint (it accounted for less than 2% of total exports in 1988), but the potential for growth is considerable, as witness the alacrity of West German banks in providing credit. In conjunction with exports to the German Democratic Republic of roughly the same proportion as those to the Soviet Union—which fall into a statistical black hole in official international publications—the West German economic drive to the East has sound economic calculus behind it.

France, on the other hand, does not stand to benefit greatly from *perestroika*. The manufacture of industrial plant equipment is not a strength of the French economy, and its machine tool industry, in particular, is notoriously weak. In 1988, the French franc value of exports to the Soviet Union rose by 10%, but their absolute value was only a third of that of West German exports. The rate of increase was less than that of exports to the rest of the European Community (whereas, in the case of West Germany, the opposite was true). France's fast-growing export markets in recent years have included notably the United Kingdom, Spain and Portugal—on Europe's Atlantic seaboard. The French economy, moreover, remains more dependent than the West German one on the overall level of EC growth.

The controversial question of tax harmonisation is central to the present efforts to complete the European Community's single or internal market by the end of 1992. It has become increasingly clear since Michel Rocard signalled the alarm in September last year that here France is in a real quandary. Its Treasury is heavily dependent on indirect taxation, mainly in the form of Value Added Tax, and the European Commission's tax-harmonisation plans—even in their new, watered-down or pragmatic version—promise a most unwelcome squeeze on government revenue. An additional problem is the taxation of interest income. Full liberalisation of capital movements in July 1990 will, the French fear, accelerate an outward flow of savings to the tax haven constituted by Luxembourg: however, present signs are that the European Community is incapable of introducing a common tax structure in this area.

To these French problems, West Germany is essentially indifferent. Its Value Added Tax structure is already virtually in line with proposed EC norms. And provocatively, in the face of French insistence on uniform Community-wide Withholding Taxes on interest income, the Bonn government in April of this year abolished its own Withholding Tax and then in May declared its opposition to restarting anew on a common European basis.

IT MUST NOT BE assumed that France and the Federal Republic share an identity of interest in the matter of European monetary integration or union. The creation of the Franco-German Economic and Financial Council in January 1988—in parallel to the Franco-German Defence Council—was no signal of unanimity on European monetary matters between Paris and Bonn, and even less between Paris and Frankfurt. Indeed, the *Bundesbank* objected on legal or quasi-constitutional grounds to the Council's very existence. However, now that the theatre of the European Council's June 1989 meeting is over, the true test of the two countries' views on Europe's monetary future will be their considered official reactions to the Delors Report—the *Report on Economic and Monetary Union in the European Community*, to entitle it more formally. Its publication in April 1989 was the result of the European Council's mandate to a committee (which included all EC central bank governors, and was headed by the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors) "to study and propose concrete stages leading towards economic and monetary union", and it is now serving as the basis for continuing discussons on the matter.

The heart of the Delors Report's various proposals lies in a single EC currency and a federal central banking structure: the so-called European System of Central Banks (ESCB), whose inspiration, even if it is left unsaid, comes partly from the experience of the Federal Reserve System in the United States. What is noteworthy is that progress towards "irrevo-

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cably locked exchange rates" and the eventual replacement of national currencies by a single EC currency would not be based on what the Report terms a "parallel currency strategy," which the Report rejects. Thus, the *Ecu,* which is still no more than a currency basket, would not be transformed into a full-fledged currency, competing with national currencies and finally displacing them. Instead, the EMS exchange-rate mechanism would be consolidated along existing lines, with the Deutschmark obviously continuing to serve as an "'anchor' for participants' monetary and intervention policies" prior to the irrevocable fixing of parities—to quote from the sentence which Karl Otto Pöhl, President of the *Bundesbank*, has declared to be the best in the Report.

Under the Delors proposals, therefore, the emergence of a single currency would essentially mean the emergence of the Deutschmark, duly rechristened, as the real *Ecu.* And this points to a key role for the *Bundesbank* within the ESCB, perhaps analogous to that of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York within the Federal Reserve System (this has, indeed, been suggested by Niels Thygesen, one of the Delors Committee's three independent experts).

As befits a text largely prepared by central bankers, the Delors Report proposes that the ESCB's Council should be independent of instructions from national governments and other Community authorities. It also proposes that there should be restrictive rules governing the size and financing of national budget deficits.

The according of primacy to non-inflationary monetary policy, as framed by an independent European central bank in which the *Bundesbank* would have a large say, might be judged in the Federal Republic's interest if Bonn were to accept without reservation the Delors Report's federalist premises. But, on the assumption that the *Bundesbank* would retain a leading role, it is less obvious that it should be considered in France's interest to surrender sovereignty in this sphere. And indeed, the former French Finance Minister, Edouard Balladur, whose EMS reform proposals in January 1988 were at the origin of the European Council's mandate to the Delors Committee, has recently stated that European monetary union should not mean the supplanting of national currencies by a single Community currency.[12]

ONE FRENCHMAN WHO has no fear of the loss of national monetary sovereignty is Alain Minc, a prominent member of the French intelligentsia and the right-hand man in France of the Italian industrialist and financier Carlo De Benedetti. Minc's *La grande illusion*—a work in the curiously French genre of half book and half pamphlet—was a best-seller in the non-fiction lists in France and Belgium in the first half of 1989.[13] Panting and breathless in style, it contains many acute remarks about the misconceptions that surround "the myth of 1992".

Minc's central concern, however, is what he terms "the continental drift"—that is to say, the Federal Republic's drift eastwards, towing in its wake Western Europe as a whole. His preferred solution is breath-takingly simple: the assumption by France of the Federal Republic's nuclear defence, coupled with a far-reaching political union between the two countries. Suffice to say that the reasoning is cavalier; the work seems premised on the type of US decline heralded by Paul Kennedy (and perhaps also on the expectation, when *La grande illusion* was first thought of, that George Bush was set to be the loser in November 1988).

There is not the identity of interests between France and the Federal Republic that Minc so readily tends to assume. All is not wrong in the Federal Republic's looking eastward. Nor is the Atlantic Alliance dead. Within the European Community, much has changed since 1963. In particular, the accession of Britain and Spain, both of whose economies have been greatly transformed, makes (potentially, at least) for a community of states that cannot be reduced to the Franco-German alliance. And Britain and France have a special responsibility, in the area of Defence, which goes beyond the framework of the European Community.

IN TRUTH, the European Community itself has come to a moment of choice. There are two ways forward; and they cannot be taken in parallel.

On the one hand, there is the option of a decisive advance in the direction of a federal Europe. A treaty providing for economic and monetary union, as prescribed by the Delors Report, would follow on the Single European Act of 1986. And matters of Defence or Security would eventually fall squarely within the Community's purview (rather than being on the fringe of what EC jargon terms "European Cooperation in the sphere of foreign policy"). Harbingers of this advance have been the Tindemans Report on European Union in 1975[14] and, much more recently, various of Jacques Delors's utterances in his capacity as President of the European Commission.[15] Under the federal option, there would be no room for Europe's neutrals: Austria would have to be turned away from the door, and the EC membership debate

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[12] *Passion et longueur de temps: dialogues avec Jean-Pierre Elkabbach.* By EDOUARD BALLADUR. Fayard, FF 98.

[13] *La grande illusion.* By ALAIN MINC. Bernard Grasset, FF 98.

[14] The Tindemans Report, which was quietly shelved by the European Council in 1976, bears rereading today since various EC developments since the late 1970s have been very much in line with its proposals. On the question of Defence, Leo Tindemans—then Belgian Prime Minister and afterwards Foreign Minister (1981-89)—recommended that "security" should be an integral part of the European Union's common foreign policy, that there should be a common defence policy, and that the European Parliament should take over the function of the Western European Union's Assembly.

[15] Delors's federalist learnings have been evident in his hands-off approach to EFTA countries, as witness part of his statement to the European Parliament in January 1989 announcing the broad lines of Commission policy for 1989-92:

> ". . . the Community is much more than a large market. It is a frontier-free economic and social area on the way to becoming a political union entailing closer cooperation on foreign policy and security. The marriage contract is, as it were, indissoluble, even though its clauses have not been applied in full. Only that *affectio societatis* which binds our twelve countries enables us to rise above the difficulties and contradictions, to advance in all areas of our collective activity. It is extremely difficult, within this all-embracing union, to provide a choice of menus."

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in certain other European Free Trade Area countries would lose all purpose. Any idea that a country like Hungary might one day join the federation would be quite unrealistic.

On the other hand, there is the option of muddling on. Notwithstanding the ambiguities of the Treaty of Rome and the Single European Act, the European Community would remain essentially a confederation of states—and a geographically elastic one. Western European Defence would be kept apart: that is to say firmly wedded to NATO and, subsidiarily, to the Western European Union.

The thrust of West German foreign policy, close ties with EFTA countries and the fluidity of the political situation to the east of the Elbe would seem to dictate that the Federal Republic should choose the latter of the two ways forward, whatever its future decisions about nuclear weapons. A European Community which preserves its confederal character would be more open to enlargement in the long run. It would seem also the more realistic way forward: if there is to be a phoenix called *Mitteleuropa*, any idea that there might be space for it in an EC federal state, facing the Soviet Union in a bipolar Europe, stretches credulity.

Bonn and Paris face, then, a cluster of questions about Europe's long-term future: relations eastwards, the role of NATO, further EC enlargement, and monetary union. The present dramatic backdrop is the apparent blurring of the contours of the Yalta settlement. And it is this, of course, which has kindled the hopes of some for an eventual end to the separation between the two Germanies. Such unification, under the flag of Europe, would seem to be the ultimate aspiration of a Hans-Dietrich Genscher, with his ardent *Ostpolitik* and his equally ardent espousal of the design of the Delors Report on monetary union.

Political realities have a recalcitrance of their own, however. Europe's political map cannot be redrawn at will. As Mikhail Gorbachov stressed in his address to the Council of Europe in July 1989, there is no readiness on the Soviet side to equate the overcoming of the division of Europe with "overcoming socialism".

For Europe's foreseeable future, there is still room for the special relation embodied in Adenauer's and de Gaulle's treaty. Yet it will not necessarily dictate EC developments. From a French standpoint, an untoward wind blows through the rose garden at Rhöndorf. The garden itself should survive—but it will not be so sheltered as once it was.

# AUTHORS

**Elizabeth Jolley** (b. 1923) left England in 1959 to move with her husband and children to Australia. Her fiction and poetry have appeared in various literary journals and anthologies—and in such magazines as *The New Yorker*—and, with her plays, have been broadcast on British and Australian radio. Her most recent books include *The Sugar Mother, My Father's Moon,* and *Palomino,* published by Viking Penguin. Among her numerous awards is the Order of Australia, conferred in 1988 for services to literature. She now lives in Perth, where she teaches at the Curtin University of Technology and is "a small-scale hobby orchardist and goose farmer".

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# CONTROVERSY

# Anthropology's Auto-da-Fé

## *The Seville Declaration—By* ROBIN FOX

IN 1986, DURING the business meeting of the American Anthropological Association's annual conference, a proposal was made that "the Seville Declaration on Violence" be adopted as the Association's "official policy". It was evidently adopted *nem. con.* At various times in the past the agents of righteousness had passed other "resolutions" of a roughly similar type, including condemnations of various heresies and heretics. Thus, Derek Freeman and his publisher (the Harvard University Press, of all people) had got the treatment for daring to criticise Margaret Mead and the official line of cultural determinism, and "sociobiology" had been given an attempted going-over. I, and many other members of the association, in disgust at these exercises, or out of indifference, had stopped going to the "business meetings". As is the Association's rule, however, the matter was eventually put to a mail ballot for confirmation.

Before this happened, news not only of the Declaration itself, but of "the Seville Declaration Network", began to percolate. *Vogue* ran a column on the network, explaining that it was run by one David Adams of Wesleyan University, and was "promoting the adoption" of the Declaration. If adopted by enough concerned bodies, *Vogue* concluded, the Declaration would not necessarily stop wars, but would "give us one less excuse for having them". The offending "excuse", it seemed, was that we were innately aggressive and that this innate aggression made war inevitable.

In a further development, the *Human Ethology Newsletter* for June 1987 contained a copy of the text. It also carried a critical commentary by Joseph Manson and Richard Wrangham (University of Michigan) and a reply by Robert Hinde (University of Cambridge), one of the signatories.

To be fully fair here, let me print the document in question exactly as given in the *Newsletter*. It evidently derived from a meeting of luminaries in Seville on 16 May 1986 which was "supported by Spanish UNESCO", and was designed to appear in the volume of papers from the conference (which I have not seen).[1] The "Seville Declaration Network" is a group of activists whose goal is to get publicity for the Declaration, but especially to engineer its "adoption" as the "official policy" by learned and scientific societies. The document is evidently "proposed for adoption by UNESCO", and indeed this may well have happened by now. Here it is:

**Statement on Violence**

BELIEVING THAT it is our responsibility to address from particular disciplines the most dangerous and destructive activities of our species, violence and war; recognizing that science is a human cultural product which cannot be definitive or all-encompassing; and gratefully acknowledging the support of the authorities of Seville and representatives of the Spanish UNESCO; we, the undersigned scholars from around the world and from relevant sciences, have met and arrived at the following Statement on Violence. In it, we challenge a number of alleged biological findings that have been used even by some in our disciplines, to justify violence and war. Because the alleged findings have contributed to an atmosphere of pessimism in our time, we submit that open, considered rejection of these misstatements can contribute significantly to the International Year of Peace.

Misuse of scientific theories and data to justify violence and war is not new but has been made since the advent of modern science. For example, the theory of evolution has been used not only to justify war, but also genocide, colonialism, and suppression of the weak.

We state our position in the form of five propositions. We

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[1] Ramirez, Hinde and Groebel (eds), *Essays on Violence.*



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are aware that there are many other issues about violence and war that could be fruitfully addressed from a standpoint of our disciplines, but we restrict ourselves here to what we consider a most important step.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors. Although fighting occurs widely throughout animal species, only a few cases of destructive intra-species fighting between organized groups have ever been reported among naturally living species, and none of these involve the use of tools designed to be weapons. Normal predatory feeding upon other species cannot be equated with intra-species violence. Warfare is a peculiarly human phenomenon and does not occur in other animals.

The fact that warfare has changed so radically over time indicates that it is a product of culture. Its biological connection is primarily through language which makes possible the coordination of groups, the transmission of technology, and the use of tools. War is biologically possible, but it is not inevitable, as evidenced by its variation in occurrence and nature over time and space. There are cultures which have not engaged in war for centuries, and there are cultures which have engaged in war frequently at some times and not at others.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that war or any other violent behavior is genetically programmed into our human nature. While genes are involved at all levels of nervous system function, they provide a developmental potential that can be actualized only in conjunction with the ecological and social environment. While individuals vary in their predispositions to be affected by their experience, it is the interaction between their genetic endowment and conditions of nurturance that determines their personalities. Except for rare pathologies the genes do not produce individuals necessarily predisposed to violence. Neither do they determine the opposite. While genes are co-involved in establishing our behavioral capacities, they do not by themselves specify the outcome.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behavior more than for other kinds of behavior. In all well-studied species, status within the group is achieved by the ability to cooperate and to fulfill social functions relevant to the structure of that group. "Dominance" involves social bondings and affiliations; it is not simply a matter of the possession and use of superior physical power, although it does involve aggressive behaviors. Where genetic selection for aggressive behavior has been artificially instituted in animals, it has rapidly succeeded in producing hyperaggressive individuals; this indicates that aggression was not maximally selected under natural conditions. When such experimentally-created hyperaggressive animals are present in a social group, they either disrupt its social structure or are driven out. Violence is neither in our evolutionary legacy nor in our genes.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that humans have a "violent brain". While we do have the neural apparatus to act violently, it is not automatically activated by internal or external stimuli. Like higher primates and unlike other animals, our higher neural processes filter such stimuli before they can be acted upon. How we act is shaped by how we have been conditioned and socialized. There is nothing in our neurophysiology that compels us to react violently.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that war is caused by "instinct" or any other single motivation. The emergence of modern warfare has been a journey from the primacy of emotional and motivational factors, sometimes called "instincts", to the primacy of cognitive factors. Modern war involves institutional use of personal characteristics such as obedience, suggestibility, and idealism, social skills such as language, and rational considerations such as cost-calculation, planning, and information processing. The technology of modern war has exaggerated traits associated with violence both in the training of actual combatants and in the preparation of support for war in the general population. As a result of this exaggeration, such traits are often mistaken to be the causes rather than the consequences of the products.

We conclude that biology does not condemn humanity to war, and that humanity can be freed from the bondage of biological pessimism and empowered with confidence to undertake the transformative tasks needed in this International Year of Peace and in the years to come. Although these tasks are mainly institutional and collective, they also rest upon the consciousness of individual participants for whom pessimism and optimism are crucial factors. Just as "wars begin in the minds of men", peace also begins in our minds. The same species who invented war is capable of inventing peace. The responsibility lies with each of us.

*Seville, Spain, 16 May 1986*

**David Adams** (Psychology, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, USA); **S. A. Barnett** (Ethology, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia); **N. P. Bekhtereva** (Neurophysiology, Institute for Experimental Medicine of Academy of Medical Sciences of USSR, Leningrad, USSR); **Bonnie Frank Carter** (Psychology, Albert Einstein Medical Center, Philadelphia, PA, USA); **José M. Rodriguez Delgado** (Neurophysiology, Centro de Estudios Neurobiologicos, Madrid, Spain); **José Luis Díaz** (Ethology, Instituto Mexicano de Psiquiatra, Mexico D.F., Mexico); **Andrzej Eliasz** (Individual Differences Psychology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland); **Santiago Genovés** (Biological Anthropology, Instituto de Antropologicos, Mexico D.F., Mexico); **Benson E. Ginsburg** (Behavior Genetics, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, USA); **Jo Groebel** (Social Psychology, Erziehungswissenschaftliche Hochschule, Landau, Federal Republic of Germany); **Samir-Kumar Ghosh** (Sociology, Indian Institute of Human Sciences, Calcutta, India); **Robert Hinde** (Animal Behavior, Cambridge University, UK); **Richard E. Leakey** (Physical Anthropology, National Museum of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya); **Tana M. Malasi** (Psychiatry, Kuwait University, Kuwait); **J. Martin Ramirez** (Psychobiology, Universidad de Sevilla, Spain); **Federico Mayor Zaragoza** (Biochemistry, Universidad Autónoma, Madrid, Spain); **Diana L. Mendoza** (Ethology, Universidad de Sevilla, Spain); **Ashis Nandy** (Political Psychology, Center for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, India); **John Paul Scott** (Animal Behavior, Bowling Green State University, Ohio, USA); **Riitta Wahlstrom** (Psychology, University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

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THE DOCUMENT WAS SIGNED by some Western savants whose scientific eminence is not in question. It was also signed by people from behind "the Iron Curtain". One knows that it is usually hard to get such ideological agreement, so this was a curiosity at least. It also seemed that many who would have had something to contribute—for example myself and many who think like me and work in similar areas related to the study of violence—were never invited in the first place. It began to look awfully like a stacked deck—and the equal unease felt by leading researchers (such as Wrangham and Manson) showed that there were others who had a strange feeling of being railroaded.

However, the "network" was squirrelling away, and by now the American Anthropological Association was putting the issue to a mail ballot. The only "text" sent out with the ballot was the five *"It is scientifically incorrect..."* pronouncements. Approximately 8,500 ballots were sent; only about 2,200 were returned. Predictably, 1,699 voted in favour, 230 against; the rest must have been abstentions. Before the results came out, I decided to make some protest. I felt that the *nem. con.* vote at the business meeting should not go unchallenged, lest people out there in the world should think that it represented the views of all anthropologists. So I wrote the following letter to *Anthropology Newsletter* (vol. 28, no. 8, 1987), the monthly house organ of the Association.

> "It disturbs me that 'the Seville Declaration on Violence' might become official AAA policy without anyone offering a murmur of dissent. It is not that one cannot readily agree with the rather obvious propositions. Indeed, it is a little like being asked to vote in favor of mom and apple pie. But this exercise in self-righteous piety, while leaving its sponsors with a warm glow of moral superiority, does nothing to advance our understanding of the dilemma of human violence. What is more, it raises false hope in suggesting that a condemnation of such simplistic notions as 'innate aggression causes war' will remove 'pessimism' and therefore lead to peace on earth. It isn't pessimism that threatens peace but fanaticism—even the sober considered kind exemplified by this document. To me, at least, the prospect of being at the mercy of human intelligence and culture, given its record, is far more frightening than being at the mercy of 'aggressive instincts', which I think I understand and can handle.
>
> I certainly do not believe that such instincts 'cause' war. (See 'The Violent Imagination', in P. Marsh and A. Campbell, eds, *Aggression and Violence,* Basil Blackwell, 1982.) But I believe they exist, and that complementary to them are the equally powerful instincts to ritualize aggression. I also believe that in the 'normal circumstances' of our species—that proverbial 99% of our existence in the palaeolithic—these would be in some kind of healthy balance, as they were and are for other aggressive animals. But I also know that this is no longer the case and that what we now have to fear is something far more terrible than simple aggression.
>
> Except for a few pathological cases, aggression is not a basic motive for action; it is a tool of other more frightening motives. What the supporters of this resolution do not seem to understand is that their own action in drawing up a list of heresies and pushing for their general condemnation tells us more about our dismal prospects for survival than anything they can say about human aggression. Our worst enemy is *fanaticism* (xenophobic or ideological or both) and our capacity for an intelligent *routinization of fanaticism.* Aggression is merely a handmaiden that can be called into play once the heretics are identified and condemned, ostracized and silenced, and eventually tortured and burned. It is ironically appropriate that this document should have originated in that sordid center of the Inquisition, Seville.
>
> No, I'm afraid that the absolute 'scientific' proof that innate aggression is not the cause of our troubles does nothing to alleviate my pessimism, and this declaration and the thoughtless acceptance of it do a lot to deepen my gloom over the prospects for human survival. The nuclear war they anticipate will certainly not be 'caused' by innate aggression, but by mechanisms closer to those that produced this pointless document. It is that that the students of human survival should be considering, not shopworn denunciations of ideas that no one ever really held in the first place."

THE RESPONSE was quite remarkable. Clearly a large number of those who did not vote or speak up at the business meeting were nevertheless as disturbed as I was, but—and now we come to the sinister aspect of this whole affair—*they confessed that they were afraid to voice objections.* In fact, an entire distinguished university department voted in support of my letter and condemned the Declaration, but this was never made public. The reason for this is, as my reply indicates, that it is hard to disagree with the propositions baldly stated, however much one may dislike bald assertion or the anti-scientific manner of it. But most of the fear expressed was of offending their "morally committed colleagues" (an actual statement from a letter). No one wished to appear "anti-peace" or "pro-sociobiology" or "anti-relativist", or whatever. The "good people" had claimed the moral high ground here, and managed to make any opposition look like advocacy of Nuclear War.[2]

But a surprising number of people (certainly more than the 230 who voted against) were obviously disturbed by the dogmatic, assertive tone of the Declaration, and its sinister claim to know who the heretics were without naming them (shades of McCarthy). They were especially unsettled by its arrogant insistence that scientific disputes could be determined by majority votes of institutional memberships, or even in the columns of *Vogue.* In a subsequent issue of the *Anthropology Newsletter* (February 1988), Walter P. Zenner of the State University of New York at Albany wrote:

"I am sure that the over 80% of AAA members who

[2] Two people wrote to the *Newsletter* protesting about my denigration of "a city and a nation" in my reference to Seville. This is puzzling. Do they mean there was no Inquisition; that Seville was not its centre; that it was not sordid? No disrespect was meant to Spain or to Seville. But the Spanish Inquisition was a fact, and Seville was its sordid centre.

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voted to endorse the Seville Statement on Violence did so out of a sincere belief that they were taking a step toward the elimination of war and other forms of aggressive behavior and toward disabusing the public of erroneous and unscientific explanations of such phenomena. Unfortunately, this accusation was taken without a thorough public debate, and thus it constitutes a ritual of good intentions.

What offended me in the Seville statement was its dogmatic tone and its assumption that we have sufficient knowledge to state a correct scientific position. It also distresses me that 80% of my colleagues act as if scholarly decisions can be made by legislation and resolutions rather than through research, open debate, and a free, not majoritarian, consensus.

We also are biased in favour of environmentalist positions and tend to reject any hint that human beings may have tendencies toward risk-taking, aggression, violence or sadomasochism, despite the fact that we are, as Doris Lessing suggested, 'children of violence'.

We must explain these phenomena, not shove plausible explanations, however unpalatable to our utopian tastes, under the rug. While we clearly remember the evils of racism, whether Nazi, North American or South African, we forget the atrocities committed under the banner of radical environmentalism by Stalin, Lysenko, and others. We must remember that, in this century, the road to hell has literally been paved with good intentions."

THE MOTIVE for all this declamation and heresy-hunting did not become clear until the *Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation Newsletter* asked to reprint my letter and solicit a reply from the network's spokesman, David Adams. (For twelve years I was a director of research for the Foundation, which is devoted to the study of violence and aggression, so it seemed appropriate.) They printed my letter,[3] but Adams refused to reply, referring them instead to his original paper at the Seville conference. They printed a précis of it:

"126 college students answered questions (and 114 completed follow-up questionnaires a month later) regarding their attitudes to peace activity, beliefs concerning human nature and war, feelings of anger about the arms race, and normative attitudes about peace activity of family, friends, and school. 40% of the students answered 'very much' or 'somewhat' to the question *'Do you believe that war is intrinsic to human nature?'* 40% agreed that *'there is a war instinct'* and 33% that *'wars are inevitable because human beings are naturally aggressive'*. The researchers then examined the history of 'peace activity' by students holding these views.

As predicted, beliefs about human nature and war proved to be significant correlates of peace activity. . . .

These results support the need for a worldwide educational campaign to dispel the myth that war is instinctive, intrinsic to human nature, or unavoidable because of an alleged biological bias. As shown by the result obtained here, such a myth is widespread and constitutes an important obstacle that interferes with the development of activity for peace. . . .

The data obtained in this study are consistent with similar results obtained in Finland and in a pilot study . . . in the US. In all three studies it was found that a student is more likely to believe that he or she can do something about nuclear war if he or she believes that war is not intrinsic to human nature."

Since this was evidently the inspiration for "the Seville Declaration", let me start with it and return to the Declaration later.

THE PROBLEM WITH this survey of the "attitudes" of 126 students is the problem with all such studies: garbage in, garbage out. Just a look at the nature of the questions shows how loaded a deck was being dealt. David Adams probably got the answers he did because he asked his questions in the context of a barrage of inquiries about "peace activities".

What's more, we really have no idea why students answered "Yes" to these questions. It could have been, for example, on the basis of their deeply held religious beliefs about original sin and the fall of man. In contrast, it is rather doubtful that their replies were the result of reading abstruse papers on the nature of aggression by neuroscientists. Indeed, Adams fails to make any connection between aggression research that claims to show we have an innate aggressive instinct (and that aggression is therefore inevitable) and the beliefs of these 126 students. Even if the Declaration succeeds in its inquisitorial aim of silencing such research, this does not mean that the "myth" will be silenced or that the majority of people will then take up "peace activities" on a large scale. Millions of people have, after all, held such beliefs for thousands of years in the absence of any research on aggression. If, as I believe, it is far more likely that religious conservatism has prompted these answers, a more plausible explanation is readily at hand. Religious conservatives are, after all, not noted for their fondness for "peace activities" if this means participating in Left-liberal or, even worse, radical marches, protests, and demonstrations.

And what would David Adams do if these people told him that they prayed daily for peace, because only God's intervention can save us from the consequences of our innate depravity? One can perhaps be forgiven for assuming that he wouldn't count this as a "peace activity". If he *had* made the religion-pessimism connection, would he then have called for a declaration denouncing religion? Again, we can be forgiven for supposing he wouldn't have done so; and, if he had, that UNESCO wouldn't have sponsored it.

AGAIN, WHAT IF Adams had gone to countries with Marxist-Leninist educational systems (as opposed to Christian-derived ones), and asked, in the context of questions about the causes of war and peace, *"Is war between the imperialist*

[3] *Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation Newsletter* (vol. 4, no. 1, Fall 1987).

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*monopoly capitalist countries and the revolutionary proletarian countries inevitable?"* He would certainly have got "Yes" answers to that impeccable environmentalist-historical position, but precious few of his respondents would have been engaged in "peace activities"—at least as he defines them.

What would he then have concluded? That we should have a declaration denouncing the myth of environmentalist causes of war, so that there would be an upsurge in "peace activities" by all the Marxist-Leninist pessimists? Again, one may be excused for entertaining some doubts. If anything like it had occurred, those signatories from behind "the Iron Curtain" would never have been in Seville to start with. Fortunately, Adams found just the thing to bring them all together under the banner of UNESCO: a heresy hunt in which environmental determinists on both sides of the Curtain could agree.

Let's not, at all costs, look for the real causes of war—let's condemn instead a few writers and scientists who are easy targets. But let us condemn these writers without naming them, for if we did their small numbers and pitiful influence would belie the need for our elaborate condemnation.

IF THE FOREGOING IMPLIES a certain cynicism about the role of UNESCO, this is not accidental. It has become an article of faith among "peace activists" to believe in UNESCO right or wrong. Those who find in UNESCO a spent idea which because of its internal contradictions cannot do what it overtly claims to be doing, are automatically condemned as reactionaries or whatever the current term of disapprobation happens to be. But anyone who has read, for example, Peter Lengyel's excellent, honest, and disturbing account[4] will be left in no doubt that by its very nature the institution cannot fulfil its functions.

The original UNESCO ideal of a secular humanitarianism, still embodied in its charter, is described by Lengyel as "the last great manifesto of the 18th-century Enlightenment, a utopian document reflecting fervid belief in the bases of the liberal democracies that had just triumphed over fascism and pinning hopes on reform through education, science and reason". It was in trouble from the start since the Catholic countries opposed it and Julian Huxley, its first Director General, was forced out. Once the Marxist, Eastern, and Third World countries became active members (if not always steady financial contributors), the ideological quagmire deepened and the "search for a universalist ideology" was doomed. Hence there was a tendency to find a way of "agreeing on denominators which offended nobody and generalizations so broad that everybody can subscribe to them". This beautifully describes the Seville Declaration; that it should be achieved by scapegoating a few unnamed offenders is well in line with UNESCO tradition, despite what the optimists would like to think.

[4] Peter Lengyel, *International Social Science: The Unesco Experience* (Transaction Books, 1986). See also, in ENCOUNTER, December 1984, Gordon Crovitz, "The Decline & Fall of Unesco".

[5] Robin Fox, *The Search for Society: Quest for a Biosocial Science and Morality* (Rutgers University Press, 1989).

WHILE I SAID IN MY PROTEST that the issue was not really any disagreement with the propositions to which "everybody can subscribe", it would be well to look at them a little more closely. The first two propositions are more or less the same—that we have not inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors; and that violence and war are not programmed into human nature. In the first proposition, this is "proved" by stating the obvious truth: "that [since] warfare has changed so radically over time . . . it is a product of culture." Thus war is possible, but it is not inevitable, "as evidenced by its variation in occurrence and nature over time and space".

Now, though one can subscribe in a general way to the propositions as stated, there is a problem with spelling them out in this way. And this is the issue all along: one can more or less subscribe to the bald statements, but not necessarily to the implications read into them. Thus, for example, the fact that warfare is not a *constant* among all societies at all times does not *prove* that it is "culturally rather than biologically" caused. It merely shows that it varies in its incidence, which is as true for biological as for cultural phenomena. Even if war is indeed culturally rather than biologically "caused", variation in incidence does not prove this. And insisting that it does only deters us from looking at the biological components of war and warlike behaviour. "Warfare" among those species that exhibit it—species which certainly lack language and culture in the human sense—is not constant either.

Part of what those of us interested in aggression study is why, for example, chimpanzees under some conditions live peacefully and at other times practise murderous genocidal and cannibalistic "warfare". We can't attribute this to "culture". These wars do not begin (as the Preamble to the UNESCO Charter would have it) "in the minds of men". But neither are they the direct expressions of any genetic tendency, as far as we can see. Chimpanzees do engage in predation of other species, and it therefore becomes an open question how far this kind of "violence" is related to their intraspecific violence; particularly since chimpanzees often eat the other chimps they kill. At the moment we simply do not understand the exact interplay of innate violent predispositions, ecology, resource competition, mate competition, predation, and territoriality. But the issue can only be decided by careful investigation, not by majority vote.

This is what Robert Hinde fails to grasp in his reply to Manson and Wrangham. The very reasoned and argued nature of his reply in effect belies the nature of the Declaration. If the arguments of the Declaration are to be countered or supported, then this must follow his model of countering the Manson-Wrangham argument—i.e., through reason and counter-evidence, and not by majoritarian "resolutions" passed by bodies the majority of whose members have never engaged in relevant research and do not know the basic published materials, but are following an ideological line.

I have myself put forward a quite elaborate theory of the variation in the incidence of warfare in human history,[5] so I am quite able to subscribe to the view that it varies over time. One cannot object to this way of putting it. But to conclude that this "proves" it is a "product of culture", with the implication that there are no biological components, is un-

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warranted. The Declaration itself says that its "biological connection is primarily through language"—which at least admits a biological connection. But why stop there? The complex relationship between selection for successful speaking, successful mating, and successful aggression has to be explored.

Let me note another grand tautology built into the argument. If warfare is declared in advance to be "uniquely human", then—since culture is the species-specific behaviour of *Homo sapiens*—war is "culturally caused", by definition. But the species-specific behaviour of any species is part of its "evolutionary heritage", again by definition. So the fact that war is culturally caused does not cut us off from an evolutionary (i.e., biological) understanding of it. It is all part of the understanding of the biological basis of culture (i.e., specifically human behaviour).

The third of the "scientifically incorrect" heresies is that there has been selection for aggressive behaviour *more than* for other kinds of behaviour. But what could "more than" mean here? Has there, for example, been a greater selection for the human "power grip" than for the human "striding walk"? I don't know what "greater" or "more than" could mean in these contexts.

In a certain sense the statement is tautological (and therefore impossible to disagree with). All human attributes have evolved to the same stage—how can some have evolved "more than" others? The rather incoherent justification for this statement, however, is probably no more than a simple recognition that hyperaggressive animals are not likely to succeed well in social groups. I know no one who would deny this. But a careful mix of aggression with the other factors mentioned—status, dominance, social bonding, affiliation, cooperation, and physical power—is certainly, for example, a central part of success in competitive mating situations. It may well be the essential part, in the sense that without it all the other items do not ensure reproductive success. On the other hand, hyperaggressivity without the leavening of the rest of the repertoire will rarely, except in some species, have happy results. But to conclude that "Violence is neither in our evolutionary legacy nor in our genes" is to oversimplify violently the very complex interaction of aggression with other factors which is, after all, implicit in what they are themselves saying.

In some very real sense violence *is* in our genetic/evolutionary legacy. If it isn't, how on earth do we and other species come to manifest it so regularly? Of course, the complex outcomes of the interactions of our genetic predispositions and our socio-ecological-cultural environments are not "in our genes"; and it is this problem of the expression of genetic material and its incidence that is our prime one, as the authors of the statement seem half to recognise. But they then back off from it with dogmatic and meaningless absolutist statements about what is and is not the case.

The fourth proposition about the "violent brain" is so banal that it is not worth comment. But again, while being nothing but the truth, it is not the whole truth; and it hides the fact that a number of individuals in any population have severe impairment of their capacity to "filter" stimuli, and that their neurophysiology *does* "compel them to act violently". It only takes a few of these to wreak havoc way out of proportion to their numbers.[6]

As for the final statement that war is not caused by instinct or any single motivation, again one asks, who ever said it was? Where people genuinely disagree is on the balance of forces involved. Some, certainly, would put more stress on the innate components than others. But these are hypotheses open to testing and refutation. And that brings me to my main point.

THE POINT IS NOT whether one or the other of the positions here supposed to exist is true or not. The point is that *"it is scientifically incorrect"* to say that position *X* or *Y* is true or false—especially on the grounds offered in the Declaration. Either position should be stated in a way that leaves it capable of refutation: then it is "scientific", and open to argument. Thus I have quarrelled here with the arguments of the Declaration, not to prove an alternative view "true" (even if I believe it is), but simply to show that there are valid objections and alternatives which the document arrogantly dismisses as "impossible". This is profoundly anti-scientific.

The ideal scientific situation—which Karl Popper called "the demarcation criterion"—would be one in which all could agree on a crucial test that would conclusively refute a hypothesis. If, for example, we could agree that chimpanzees do not have a "culture" but do have "war", then we could agree that war does not "begin in the minds of men" and is not "culturally rather than biologically caused". Perhaps one can be forgiven, again, for doubting that we can get such agreement. The Declaration, while reluctantly admitting that a few examples of "destructive intraspecies fighting between organized groups" are found in nature (omitting to say that one of these instances involves our closest genetic relatives), throws in the caveat that none of these "involves the use of weapons". If the defining characteristic of "war" then becomes "the use of weapons", that lets the chimps out nicely—with sighs of relief all around.

BUT THE basic objection to the arrogance of the Declaration is the same: no positions can be declared "correct" or "incorrect" by fiat. The best we can say is that the preponderance of tested hypotheses so far renders it more or less likely that such a position is correct. But we cannot predict future findings. One dreads to think what would have happened to the sciences if a list of "incorrect" positions had been drawn up in, say, 1910, and subsequent research had been guided by that list. In fact, many of the worst episodes in the history of science have resulted from just such domination of ideology over research. It is ironic, given the dogmatic cultural determinism of the Declaration, that the best example of this should come, not from the "theory of evolution" which they single out (significantly) in their preamble,

[6] See Kent G. Bailey, *Human Paleopsychology: Applications to Aggression and Pathological Processes* (1987); V. H. Mark and F. R. Ervin, *Violence and the Brain* (1970).

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but from the lunatic environmentalism of Lysenko and its implementation by Stalin.[7] Do we need to spell that example out? Or the programmes of "reform" on the environmentalist model which resulted in the genocide of millions of kulaks and Ukrainians, and the death, imprisonment, and ruination of many honest scientists?

Let us remember a few names of those who were sent into oblivion because they were "scientifically incorrect". Let us remember Vavilov, Levit, Ivanov, Karpchenko, Muller, Dobzhansky, Ephrussi, Sakharov, Zhebrak, Sergeer, Gause and Stern—the list, while finite, is very long. And let us hope that they will not be forgotten, and that their names will haunt the purveyors of absolute scientific "truth" for ever. Perhaps if David Adams had given his questionnaires to those few opponents of Lysenko's who survived, he would have received some sobering answers. But he surely would not have got UNESCO sponsorship and those brave signatures from behind the Iron Curtain appended to tautological declarations that "everyone can subscribe to".

In the end this is the nastiest and most sinister aspect of the whole tawdry affair. The Declaration's signatories challenge "a number of alleged biological findings that have been used, even by some in our disciplines, to justify violence and war". It is against the evil influence of these unnamed disciplines and the unnamed colleagues in them that they boldly take their stand. I know of no one in any discipline who has ever used biological findings to *justify* violence and war. This is an outrageous libel. I know many who have tried to understand the terrible persistence of wars and violence with the help of biological insights. But I know of none who would not willingly put these insights to the service of peace, and who is not convinced that the greater the real insight—as opposed to "pie in the sky"—the greater the chance of controlling whatever biological factors are involved. I know of many, like myself, who think that simply to deny that there are any such factors is a potentially dangerous route to take, and is in effect nothing more than a defence of an untenable environmentalist ideology.

But the Declaration actually goes on to accuse us of encouraging war by spreading "pessimism" about the possibility of stopping international conflict. That this is ludicrous is obvious on two scores. First, scientific findings on the innate components of aggression are very recent, but wars have existed throughout human history. And, second, there is no evidence that current "pessimism" about the inevitability of war stems from the biological studies in question. Some of us are certainly pessimistic, but our pessimism stems from the inevitability of human actions (like the Seville Declaration on Violence), not from any theories about innate aggression. If wars are indeed "culturally not biologically caused", given the record of culture, we are in deep trouble.

My message to the signatories remains the same. If you truly wish to prevent World War III, then the way to do it is not to indulge in the activities which, by your own admission, cause wars, to say nothing of the cruellest and most characteristically human forms of lesser violence. If one starts a punch-up in a bar, one does not risk starting a war. Aggression as such has little to do with the starting of wars—a point on which *all* can agree. But, if one tries to organise the world intellectual community to declare, by the vote of an intimidated majority, that certain testable scientific hypotheses are "incorrect", and what is more, evil and dangerous, then one is well on the way to harnessing aggressive instincts in the service of the inquisition, the pogrom, the witch hunt, the book-burning, the stamping out of heresy, and finally, the *jihad,* the crusade, and "the war to end all wars".

WARS, WE ARE REMINDED, begin in the minds of men. And today at least they begin like this: with a commitment to the true faith and a campaign against unbelievers. It was once the hope, even of UNESCO, that the values of science would help to transcend this very human and very violent tendency. This seems to have been forgotten. The professional organisations that pass these resolutions with such fervour (to which we can now add the American Psychological Association) seem to have forgotten this. Perhaps there *is* an innate tendency in "the minds of men", a tendency more terrible than aggression, a tendency which we are doomed to express and live by and which explains all this passion to lay blame and punish.

I was impudent enough to suggest that "fanaticism" is such a tendency, and that aggression is merely one of its handmaidens. But one had better not suggest it too loudly without risking the righteous wrath of those who know with absolute certainty what is or is not "scientifically correct"; who, unlike the rest of us struggling with the hard business of finding things out, have a corner on absolute truth. From those who know all the answers, may the good Lord deliver us.

[7] Julian Huxley, *Soviet Genetics and World Science* (1949); David Joravsky, *The Lysenko Affair* (1970); Z. A. Medvedyev, *The Rise and Fall of T. D. Lysenko* (1969).

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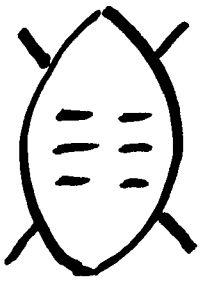
# Treasures of the Nation, Burdens of the People

## *A Political Journey through Zululand—By* LEO AYLEN



"THEY CAN'T let Mandela die in prison", I said. "No, they can't", the corporal admitted. I had just crossed the border from Swaziland into South Africa, only to be detained by the South African security forces for the afternoon. I ended up by occupying five of them for three hours, while they read every word I had written: my diary; every letter; every poem in my published books; every scribbled draft. It had started with an ordinary policeman, then a corporal, then a sergeant, and then two clean-limbed, bright-eyed officer types, wearing shorts and flip-flops, interrupting their off-duty Sunday. Not at all the thick-witted rednecks I might have expected. From time to time they tried to draw me out on South African politics. At one moment, exasperated—and, indeed, frightened—by the situation, I had burst out, "Look, I live in the middle of London, a mile from the centre of Brixton. I have masses of black friends. Do you expect me to approve of apartheid?" And this led on to the conversation about Mandela.

I allowed myself a moment of triumph at the corporal's admission. But in a sense everyone in South Africa—of whatever political persuasion—knows that Nelson Mandela *must* be released, and the Pretoria government *must* start talking with all acknowledged black leaders. And they will, they will . . . yes, yes . . . but not just yet.

Now Mandela is out of prison. Perhaps he is about to be freed. Or is he? And will he be free to campaign politically? How can he campaign if his party, the African National Congress, is banned? And once he has ceased to be an imprisoned symbol, and become an ordinary human being again, will he continue to be able to unite all South African blacks behind him?

White South Africa has changed its President, and is about to have an election. Will the Democrats, the new liberal party, regain the status of official opposition party which the Progressive Federal Party lost to the Right-wing Conservative Party in 1987? Will this election, whatever its result, make any difference to the black majority of the country?

The questions multiply. Meanwhile what should we do about South Africa now? Support the stance of Mrs Thatcher? Or campaign for increased sanctions against the apartheid régime? I met more supporters of Mrs Thatcher among the Zulus than I have done in London.

There are four main black South African political parties—each with its own answer to the question, each with its own vision of a free South Africa: AZAPO, the PAC, the ANC-UDF alliance,[1] and Inkatha. The ANC is banned in South Africa, but the UDF follows ANC policy. There is now also the Mass Democratic Movement—a larger, and even looser grouping of organisations—to which the UDF belongs. This was formed primarily to protest at the white election taking place this September, and includes banned members flaunting defiance of their banning as a part of their protest.

Inkatha was founded by Zulus in 1975, with the backing of the ANC, because the ANC had no support in rural areas. (Originally, the ANC had also been founded by Zulus.) But the two organisations have opposing policies, and in 1979 there was a violent split. For the last few years there has been fighting between UDF and Inkatha in Natal, as there is between UDF and AZAPO in the Cape.

ANYONE reasonably interested in current affairs must be aware of the ANC attitude to South Africa—the white minority government has remained so intransigent, and become so murderously violent, that there can no longer be any question of negotiation; the world must apply sanctions to South Africa, and South Africa itself must be made ungovernable, so that the revolution may take place; after the war of liberation, which will certainly be very bloody, a one-party socialist state will be established. However, very few people outside South Africa are aware of the more clearly Marxist PAC; or of AZAPO, the organisation which has developed from the Black Consciousness movement founded by Steve Biko; or of Inkatha.

The Zulus feel hurt that their efforts to liberate South Africa without violent revolution are ignored by the liberal Western world; that the Western media proclaim univer-

[1] AZAPO: Azanian People's Organisation; PAC: Pan-African Congress; ANC: African National Congress; UDF: United Democratic Front.



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sal support among South African blacks for sanctions, although the Zulus are opposed. They maintain that sanctions, which have already caused deaths among the rural poor, both strengthened the white Right Wing and united the rest of the whites behind the Nationalists, in the election of May 1987.

It is not my purpose to condemn the ANC attitude. How can I, a white man, presume to judge a sixteen-year-old Soweto black who has seen his innocent brother or sister shot by police, and decides to go over the border and train for revolutionary war? But it is surely worth trying to understand a black South African organisation whose members think that they are achieving liberation gradually, without recourse to revolutionary war.

Inkatha members disagree with each of the propositions of ANC philosophy summarised above. Unlike the ANC and UDF, which include whites, Inkatha is run by blacks for blacks, with no white members, and no whites at all involved in decision-taking. While the other organisations are called by acronyms, like Western political parties, Inkatha glories in an African name which has a rich complex of historical, cultural, and political associations, difficult for Westerners to comprehend. Founded as a Zulu organisation, and remaining mainly Zulu, with most of its support in Natal, its thinking is still more in Zulu than in the internationalised English of the other parties.

BABA WETHU, OSEZULWINI. . . . Thwack! Thwack! Enzimene, in Northern Zululand. The dry sunshine of a Zulu winter midday, contrasting strongly with the crisp frost to which I had woken that morning. Two hundred and sixty Zulu children, lined up in rows according to height, the youngest children forming the front row. They have marched into position and "dressed right" like soldiers: hand on the shoulder of the child next to them. Then, on a command from the teacher, they have closed their eyes and clasped their hands, with the precision of soldiers snapping to attention. *Baba wethu, osezulwini.* Their recitation of the Lord's Prayer is punctuated by frequent whacks with a thin cane on the hands of the front-row children. For opening eyes? For unclasping hands? I could see no deviation from impeccable behaviour.

This is a school, though one with very little: benches on the dusty earth; a water-pump worked by hand; practically no teaching aids; a couple of huts; a pervasive smell of juvenile urine. One woman to teach all the children—merely a local mother with energy, who has created the school on her own. To attend, some of the children will walk 28 kilometres a day. The teacher told me that they might well have not eaten anything before coming to school. She had tried to provide food—"Some soup and bread." But the parents objected, because they thought she was bewitching their children.

There is nothing exceptional about Enzimene.

Or visit a poorer landscape than Enzimene's rolling hills. Still hilly, but less grass and more thorn-trees. A very ordinary kraal. Some rondavels—the traditional round African huts; some *"fokhonas"* ("four-corners")—the oblong, more Western-looking hut, with a corrugated-iron roof.

An ordinary kraal, a very extraordinary woman: Allina Ndebele. She is an artist who weaves tapestry pictures of traditional Zulu stories. She spins wool, makes her own dyes, then builds a fire down by the river for boiling the dyes into the wool. She used to be a weaving instructor at the Rorke's Drift Zulu Arts Centre. But, ten years ago, she chose to leave that relative security and comfort and come back to her home kraal to attempt to train local women and run her weaving from home. Every day she has to carry the water for her family on her head half a mile up from the river. There is, of course, no electricity. If she needs to work at her tapestries after dark, she has to work by candlelight. She speaks good English, and is starting to acquire an international reputation. In the autumn of 1987, there was an exhibition of her work in Sweden and Germany. She was unable to attend. She had applied for a visa, but the Swedish government refused her entry into Sweden on the grounds that she was South African. . . .

She also is Zululand: a treasure-house head full of stories told her by her grandmother out of the traditional Zulu world, a culture preserved intact from before the white men came. A woman who has, quite consciously, chosen to carry water on her head from the river, rather than live in a Westernised society.

Allina Ndebele has nothing to do with Inkatha, or any other political party. But Inkatha is as it is because of people like her.

I have been to Allina Ndebele's kraal in dusty winter, and also during a summer thunderstorm, with its two hours of lightning before the rain comes, turning everything to squelch and sludge. I have only seen Laduma Madela's kraal in a summer downpour, slithering and splashing through the red mud. Laduma Madela, the greatest Zulu *sangoma*—prophet, magus, but please do not say witch-doctor. He is listening to the playback of the story he has just recorded on my tape-recorder. The sentences ramble: God is married; God's brother botched the creation of man; God's messengers, the lizard and the chameleon, really messed things up. But the story is told with panache, in his deep, expressive, voice; and, as he listens, he mimes to his own words with gusto. When the tape started, he removed the cloth tied round his head like a sweatband, and put on his *inkatha,* the ceremonial basketwork head-ring, appropriate garb for such a moment. Madela lives in a traditional African hut, and speaks no English, but understands tape-recorders, and requires top-quality Scotch as his fee for performing. He offers us another view of the cultural mix which is Zululand today.

The *inkatha* ring was devised for padding weights carried on the head. It acquired symbolic meaning. Before the British conquest, the Zulu king wore an *inkatha,* within which sacred objects were stowed. Symbolically, the *inkatha* carries the treasures of the nation, and the burdens of the people. Now, a political party, Inkatha, symbolises the Zulu philosophy of black liberation in South Africa.

Inkatha's philosophy is that political liberation on its own

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is not enough. People must have water; they must be educated, taught how to grow food in the rocks and dust of their eroded hillsides. I saw King Goodwill Zwelithini, King of the Zulus, at his proudest and happiest, demonstrating his broiler chickens. He had devised a system which the very poorest could use: cost per chicken, 7 cents a week; 6 weeks to maturity; total cost, 42 cents.

THERE COULD be three answers to the question "What or where is Zululand?" One could answer "Natal", since throughout Natal the African language spoken is Zulu. Then there is the so-called "historic kingdom" of Zululand, which is the northern half of Natal, with the powerful river Tugela a conspicuous boundary. Thirdly, there is the homeland which the South African government has imposed on the Zulus. This consists of a number of areas dotted all over Natal, not only in Zululand, and is called KwaZulu. Unlike the other homelands, which have accepted the "independence" offered by the white government in Pretoria, the Zulus have refused, and continue to refuse, this status. But they have accepted the intermediate stage: there is a KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, with some seats allotted to members elected by universal franchise, and others allotted to the chiefs, the traditional authorities, at the lowest, local level. There is a Cabinet, with the kind of Ministries one might expect in local government—Health, Education, Finance, Justice, and so on. KwaZulu does levy taxes; it is reckoned that about 40% of its money comes from these taxes, and the remainder comes in a grant from Pretoria. King Goodwill is a constitutional king, with no political power.

THERE IS AN impressive new Legislative Assembly building at Ulundi. Outside is a bronze statue of Shaka, the ruthless military genius who created the Zulu empire in the early 19th century. Near Ulundi is a museum which displays Zulu craft work, and some historical and pre-historical exhibits. That also is very much part of the Inkatha philosophy: a re-establishing of pride in Zulu history, Zulu culture, Zulu art.

In the museum grounds, a reconstruction of Cetshwayo's royal kraal is in progress. Traditional Zulu "beehive" huts: a half-sphere of wooden framework, which can be picked up, carried on several men's shoulders, and moved to another site, if required, and into which the thatch is woven. When I walked round this collection of huts, I found one in which a group of women were sleeping. I never discovered whether they were workers in some way connected with the project, taking a crafty midday kip, or whether they were squatters so desperate that they had, as it were, camped in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. At the most solemn Zulu ceremonies there is always some informality—an old granny patently in the wrong place; a prophet drowning the official speakers with his declamations.

Cetshwayo—the first letter of his name is one of the clicks, a sound made with tongue against front teeth, as if extracting a pip—was a tragic figure. A wise ruler, trapped by circumstances. His army had been lusting for war, and his obvious enemies were the Afrikaners who were poaching Zululand at the time. But, through some imperial bungles, the war, when it came, was fought by the British, whom Cetshwayo had no wish to fight. In a demonstration of dazzling British military ineptitude—coupled with a display of discipline, physical fitness, and courage by the Zulu army which has perhaps never been equalled (Alexander's phalanx, Julius Caesar's legions included)—the British were defeated at the battle of Isandhlwana on 22 January 1879. Lord Chelmsford, the general responsible, learned his lesson. He advanced again into Zululand, and at the battle of Ulundi destroyed the Zulu army with Gatling guns, his only casualties being nine British soldiers, three "native troopers in Shepstone's Horse", and "The Hon. W. Drummond, Interpreter".

The British imposed a savage settlement on the defeated Zulus, splitting the kingdom into thirteen pieces, and later allowing the Boers to annexe a large segment of it, while they took Cetshwayo off to England and a sad exile. There is only one moment in the story of his later life at which to smile: an occasion when he appeared in a London hotel in what to him was perfectly suitable dress—a wooden codpiece and nothing else.

CETSHWAYO'S CHIEF MINISTER and Commander-in-Chief was Mnyamana Buthelezi, whose great-grandson is Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the current leader of the Zulu people. In addition, Buthelezi is directly descended from Cetshwayo on his mother's side, so he sees his role of Zulu leader as something to which he was born. In one conversation I had with him, he compared his situation to that of Prince Charles—a person born to office. But he is also very emphatic that he was elected by the Zulus to be their leader, and all the Zulus with whom I talked were equally emphatic in referring to him as "our elected leader".

Buthelezi is a politician who takes his political decisions in the perspective of history. At a recent Inkatha conference, he devoted nearly a third of one of his speeches to the history of the last hundred years, and the lessons to be learnt from it.

When he founded Inkatha in 1975, with ANC backing, his intention was to create a black South African political party—a liberation movement—which would replace the banned ANC. He was allowed by the Pretoria government to form a Zulu "cultural organisation", and nothing more. By developing it in the first few years as a purely Zulu organisation, he managed to save it from banning.

The cultural aspect of Inkatha is, however, still important. Buthelezi has always been determined to revive Zulu traditions, as a means of rekindling pride in a people whose spirit has been ground down by apartheid. Confronted by a woman of the intelligence and sensitivity of Allina Ndebele, who has deliberately chosen the old way of life at considerable sacrifice, I doubt if many Westerners would remain totally confident of the exclusive virtue of Western ways. There is much that the old Africa can still teach modern society—about family life, for example. Delight

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in the old Zulu customs can also be a way of communicating with people such as the parents of Enzimene, who fear that a teacher who provides food for her pupils is bewitching them. And the parents of Enzimene represent by far the majority of the Zulus: people who are still, in the case of sickness, as likely to consult a *sangoma*—the traditional magic-person—as a doctor.

When Buthelezi visits King Goodwill, he will recite a short praise poem to the king; on certain occasions he appears in traditional Zulu dress. He told me how he had been very nervous when he first did this, in the 1950s. At that time apartheid was starting to manifest its nature. South African blacks were being encouraged to redevelop their "tribal" cultures; it was a way of keeping them out of modern life, pretty savages for the tourists.

Many blacks have turned away from their culture. I spoke to science students at the University of Zululand who said that they had no time to learn the old stories: all their time was taken up learning science. Oswald Mtshali, whose *Sounds of a Cowhide Drum* is for me the best South African poetry book of the 1970s, and who was born in the same Zululand town as I was, told me that, living in Johannesburg, he no longer thinks of himself as Zulu, merely as a "detribalised urban African". His decision is the conscious political decision of someone who believes that, in order to be modern, he must get rid of what is old. But there are now many who would strongly disagree, who say that it is possible to combine a powerful pride in being Zulu with an equally powerful commitment to South Africa as a whole—to the past, as a means of enriching the present. Khabi Mngoma, a musician who has done a lot to revive interest in traditional Zulu music, told me that ten years ago he had tried to get his students to wear traditional costume while performing traditional song and dance, and they had refused. Now he showed me photographs of his university music students exulting in both dance and costume.

When Buthelezi performs traditional songs and dances in Zulu costume, his happiness is obvious and infectious. I heard him personally lead off the singing of *Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*—the black national anthem—both at a degree ceremony, and at a political rally. To him, love of leopard-skin kilts and *izibongo* (praise poetry) no more disqualifies you from being a South African MP than the wearing of a Scottish kilt and enjoyment of Burns Night would disqualify a McDonald or Macmillan from being a British Member of Parliament.

TODAY ZULUS have very largely recovered their pride. They walk tall, as they did not do when I was last there ten years ago. Buthelezi told me that the Zulus say of him, "He has given us back our dignity", and the word "dignity" is often on his lips. In spite of the appalling deprivations of rural poverty, there is a feeling of confidence in KwaZulu. There are the beginnings of that feeling of racial relaxation which you encounter in Swaziland—white and black meeting as equals. I made some remark implying my fears of the South African security system. "Oh, you needn't worry about that here. You're in KwaZulu." The Group Areas Act is still officially in force. But whites are living in Ulundi, although it is designated a black area, and a Zulu friend of mine, like others, has successfully outargued the police, and continues to live in a town officially designated "White".

INKATHA NOW OFFERS ITSELF unashamedly as a black liberation movement for all South Africa, and is therefore in dispute with the other black political parties, although it is only in direct conflict with the UDF, whose support, dispersed all over South Africa, includes Natal, while AZAPO, for example, is confined to the Eastern Cape, where Inkatha has no influence.

At its founding, Inkatha's constitution required that all members of the Central Committee should be Zulus, and that the President should be a member of the Zulu royal family—making it almost inevitable that Buthelezi should be elected President. Inkatha has now changed its constitution: it contains no mention of "Zulus", only of "blacks".

Its policy is for a South Africa with many political parties, and a capitalist economy. Buthelezi constantly argues in favour of "a multi-strategy approach" (the ANC doing its thing abroad, Inkatha doing its thing in South Africa). The policy is liberation on all fronts at once—economic and educational, as well as political—while keeping within the laws. It is strongly opposed to sanctions against South Africa, which hurt the poorest most.

Its most important political initiative has been the Indaba. (The word is Zulu for "discussion".) Representatives from all political groupings were invited to meet over a period of months during 1986-87, and devise a possible constitution for the whole of Natal. Left-wing black organisations such as the UDF refused to take part. The Nationalists also refused, but sent observers. In March 1987, the Indaba published its findings. It proposed an assembly with two houses: a lower house elected by universal suffrage, and therefore dominated by blacks, who are enormously in the majority; an upper house allocating ten seats each to English, Afrikaner Asian, Black (i.e. Zulu), and a final ten to those South Africans who do not wish to be classified by race. There is also a Bill of Rights.

The ANC and the UDF condemned the Indaba, and the Pretoria government contrived to delay decision on its acceptance or rejection for so long that it has become, for all but a few of its supporters, a dead issue. Meanwhile, Pretoria continues to vacillate between abusing and wooing Buthelezi. At the beginning of this year Buthelezi met Chris Heunis, the Minister of Constitutional Development. They decided to form a committee to discuss their political differences. The committee was convened in March, but has so far achieved no obvious result.

There are, however, hopes for constitutional change in the area. In August 1986 a Bill was passed, authorising a Joint Executive Authority for KwaZulu and the province of Natal, though this is less significant than might appear. For the authority is appointed, not elected. Since 1987, Regional Services Councils—with appointed, not elected, members—have taken over the functions of the elected provincial governments.

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Opponents of the Indaba say that it was, anyhow, an irrelevance. Its defenders say that it can point the way to other indabas in other parts of South Africa. If the Indaba were to be implemented, and a constitution for Natal created which was based on one man, one vote, could this fail to change the political climate of South Africa?

Inkatha is a revolutionary movement, and Buthelezi's message to white South Africans is uncompromising: they must prepare themselves to live in a black African country, run by blacks for blacks, but a country which will still welcome whites and their contribution. Unlike most other revolutionary movements, Inkatha is in favour of capitalism, believing that capitalism is necessary for economic growth. Buthelezi said to me: "I don't think one can do things for the wider political scene if you don't deal with the people first, their needs: the fact that they must eat, the fact that they must be clothed, the fact that they must have money to educate their children."

ADVERSE CRITICISM OF Buthelezi and Inkatha has three facets: that Inkatha is a purely Zulu organisation, and is therefore irrelevant to the rest of South Africa; that it coerces and intimidates its opponents; and that Buthelezi, by taking office in a homeland, has damned himself as a black liberation leader.

Inkatha is mainly Zulu, but not wholly. At the Inkatha Conference which I attended there must have been about 6,000 present. A great number of them were Sotho, not Zulu, speakers. But nobody in Inkatha seems to have thought it important to find out the numbers of non-Zulus.

Inkatha's policy-making body is the Central Committee, consisting of about twelve people. Several non-Zulus have been members of this. The last leader of the Youth Brigade—*ex officio* a member of the Central Committee—was a Tswana, called Ntwe Mafole. I talked at length with him, and with a small group with which he is connected, who call themselves "the young South Africans", an association of people of all colours devoted to creating new multicultural linkings for the new South Africa which is coming after apartheid is abolished.

Another significant Central Committee member is Eric Lucas. He was the Natal Leader of the Labour Party, the political party for Coloureds, led by the Rev. Alan Hendrickse, which had been part of the Black Alliance, along with Inkatha and an Indian party. Eric felt personally betrayed when Hendrickse joined Botha's tricameral parliament, and the Lucas family told me the full story of this betrayal. Eric's position in Inkatha demonstrates that Coloureds can reach the party's centre.

Then there is Charlie, and those like him—"hundreds and thousands of them", Charlie said. Charlie is a Xhosa. According to Pretoria, Charlie would be a citizen of the Ciskei homeland, and so no longer South African. But when Pretoria was forcing Xhosas out of their South African citizenship, Buthelezi offered Zulu citizenship to anyone who wished to apply for it, with the promise that Zulu citizenship meant South African citizenship, for he would never accept the so-called independence offered by Pretoria, and thereby allow Zulu citizens to lose their rights as South Africans. I do not think I met a more passionately devoted follower of Buthelezi than Xhosa Charlie.

When I questioned Buthelezi about coercion and intimidation, he answered tersely: "What use would coerced members be to me?" It is widely reported that you have to belong to Inkatha in order to be elected to the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly. This is not true. Inkatha currently holds all the seats in the Assembly. But there were opposition candidates in the last KwaZulu election. Some of these polled about 2,000 votes as against winners who polled about 6,000. I said to Dr Mdlalose, the Minister of Health, and Chairman of Inkatha, that it would look better for Inkatha if there were some opposition members in the Assembly. "But what can we do?" he replied. "We can't finance the opposition."

Inkatha members have certainly attacked and killed members of the UDF—and vice versa. I have read much evidence on both sides, and have seen that some of the press reports of Inkatha violence are lies. There was, for example, an outbreak of violence at the University of Zululand on 29 October 1983, in which five people died. I have read graphic accounts of this in the press and in books, which describe an invasion of the campus by Inkatha para-military forces. However, an independent inquiry published its report in February 1985, and established a sequence of events utterly different from that reported in the press.

I have read frequently, and been told often, that Inkatha has a paramilitary force being trained in its Youth Camp. I went to the Youth Camp. There are 200 under training each year, approximately 100 of each sex. They wear a khaki uniform, and they drill; for example, I saw them on parade at the Inkatha Conference. They do not have weapons, but they are organised in platoons. When I first heard the word platoon mentioned, I was in the sewing section of the Home Economics Department, and the instructor referring to "platoons" was holding up the book of sewing samples which each girl must maintain. The work of the camp is community development—learning to lay bricks, grow vegetables, and sew. Mr Makamu, taking me round, pointed a house out to me with these words: "This is the house of the camp mother, because they're still young; they need a mother's love." Hardly a dangerous paramilitary force!

INKATHA HAS A disciplinary committee, and Inkatha members who commit acts of violence have been disciplined. Inkatha also took the lead in offering to form a joint violence-monitoring committee with the UDF. Supporters of the UDF told me that it was difficult for their party to take part in such talks: they did not trust Inkatha, they were afraid to come out of hiding, etc., etc. But they admitted that Inkatha had been trying to start talks for at least a year before the UDF had thought of them. There does now seem to be some arrangement for talks to be convened when there is an outbreak, though it has not been very effective in stopping the violence.

Buthelezi has, in addition, invited both Archie Gumede—head of the UDF—and Fatima Meer—a leading UDF intel-

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lectual—to address either the Zulu Assembly or an Inkatha meeting any time they wish. Neither has answered his invitation.

The most entrenched critics of Buthelezi, Inkatha, and the Zulu solution to South Africa are those who condemn him for participating in the system of apartheid because he holds office in a homeland. The Zulus simply ask, "Why does the liberal West regard Helen Suzman as a hero, and condemn Buthelezi?" Helen Suzman has participated in the system, by being an MP in the white South African parliament.

The Zulu politicians to whom I talked defended Buthelezi as follows. First, he was expressly entrusted with the leadership of the Zulus to prevent KwaZulu being given Pretoria-style "independence". Secondly, he is now, in their view, totally justified, because he has succeeded in destroying the Pretoria Government's design of grand apartheid; for, once one homeland has refused independence and got away with it, then South Africa cannot shove all its blacks away into second-class "homeland citizenship". Dr Mdlalose referred to blacks under apartheid by means of the image of a runaway car. "Do you sit back, and do nothing?" he asked. "Surely, you grab the wheel, and try to steer it as best you can." He and his colleagues interpret Buthelezi's actions over the last 20 (or even 30) years as a deliberate strategy to accept all stages of homeland development except the final one of "independence", and, by so doing, to destroy the policy.

Buthelezi himself firmly denies any grand strategy, and says that all developments were forced on him. But whether by intention or not, he has certainly broken Pretoria's homelands policy, and he has made it possible for any black who does not wish to be a citizen of a homeland to remain South African by taking out Zulu papers. During 1987, P. W. Botha finally—and surreptitiously—admitted defeat, by announcing that blacks would no longer be forced to become citizens of homelands. In other words the policy of Separate Development had at last been scrapped.

To the surprise even of its leaders, Inkatha membership has now topped one-and-a-half million. There is a feeling of confidence. One of the speeches I heard Buthelezi deliver was to a delegation of church people, begging them to present the Zulus' case to the international aid agencies. But his tone was not a begging tone:

> "I have arrived politically without humanitarian aid to my people. Inkatha has developed into the massive constituency that it is without humanitarian aid. We are very close to the political centre of gravity and we have already taken up a position in the forefront of the struggle of liberation. We do not need humanitarian aid for political gains. It is the people who need aid for their suffering; it is maimed and dying children who need aid; it is the destitute families who need aid."

Buthelezi has said that he would serve under Nelson Mandela, if Mandela was voted to be the leader of South Africa, and says that he hopes Mandela would serve under him, if he was so voted. No one can know whom South Africans would choose as their leader in a free vote of the entire population. But it would be difficult to leave Buthelezi out of the administration of a free South Africa.

On my first visit to his house ten years ago, a picture of a rhinoceros caught my eye. He told me how the artist had painted it for him because he was "a rhinoceros, charging the white government". But he is certainly not a rhinoceros. He does not charge, and he has a rather thin skin.

Some months ago, I was flying back to Ulundi with him after a speech he had given to a meeting of white businessmen in Johannesburg. He had spoken toughly, telling them, "White South Africa must open its eyes to reality; the only future our country has is an African future." In the plane he was on a high—joking and laughing in that typical open-mouthed, deep-voiced, Zulu way, in which the whole body laughs. Then, for relaxation, he put on a music tape: Salisbury Cathedral Choir, singing psalms to Anglican chant.

A remarkable man. A remarkable movement. A remarkable people.

## Glebe Field

Our moon-cast shadows slither as we climb
Across the chill white Glebe towards the house.
Like icy jewels, yet moving, ceaseless, look!,
You point the Pleiades, then Sirius.

Through ground set harling-hard, the Quair swirls on;
Trout in its freezing flow, alert still, mark
Vibrations from our boots at thirty feet,
And flick in fright from deep to deeper dark.

The dog sixth-senses movement we can't see,
And stops, ears pricked. Who's there? Who's watching? Stares?
A *qui vive* earth—apart, on edge, all nerves—
Stakes out what we call ours, the trespassers.

*Simon Curtis*

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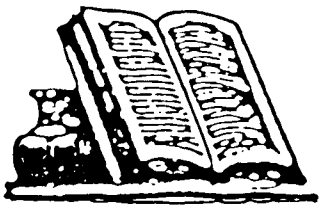
# IN THE MARGIN

# On Not Ending History

## *By Anthony Hartley*



"THE END of History" is a phrase which takes its resonance from the religious depths of man's consciousness. As a boundary of existence, foreseen and desired, it signifies the breaking of the everyday flow of human life by the incursion of a transcendent event, which may mark the second coming of a God, a day of judgment, or, on the contrary, a *Götterdämmerung*, the death of an old world and the making of all things new. For individuals it can bring with it a return from the underworld, a rising from the dead or an irrevocable condemnation.

Such apocalyptic visions have haunted the imagination, whether of seers like St John on Patmos and Joachim de Flore, or of builders of historicist systems in which human beings are seen as toiling towards some social peak where, once it is attained through a succession of disasters and sufferings, mankind will remain for ever, frozen and immobile in the contemplation of its own achievement. Hegel, Marx and Comte, notable examples of the taste of the 19th century for system-building, all envisaged a set of final buffers at the end of the perilous railway-line of history. Once there, however, the weariness of humanity would be assuaged and its happiness assured in a sort of eternal *buffet de la gare*. It was left to the 20th century to foresee a bad end to history, with the collapse of Toynbee's universal state or the disintegration of Western culture predicted by Spengler. For these thinkers our journey will end in a darkened station with everything firmly shut.

What these variants of the end of history have in common is the sense that finally, for better or for worse, something will be altered, human life will not continue as before. Human beings may be "saved" or "lost", but they will at any rate be changed, and, being changed, will become static. Like Pirandello's Enrico IV they will be "alone . . . together . . . for ever". It comes as something of a shock, therefore, to find Francis Fukuyama, deputy director of the US State Department's policy planning staff, in a bold and coruscating article in *The National Interest*, announcing "The End of History" as the result of "an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism".[1] For it soon becomes apparent that, so far from death and renewal or the disintegration and rebuilding of cultures being our lot, we are all to go on as we were. History is to end with civilisation on a life-support machine and individuals will be doomed to the immobility of characters in a Beckett play without sharing any of their metaphysical intuitions. Let me summarise Mr Fukuyama's argument.

He starts by announcing the triumph of "the Western *idea*"—evidence for which he sees not only in the "exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism", but also in "the ineluctable spread of consumerist Western culture". This victory, however, "has occurred primarily in the realm of ideas or consciousness and is as yet incomplete in the real or material world". But, as Hegel has pointed out, "all human behaviour in the material world . . . is rooted in a prior state of consciousness". It is consciousness that dictates choices in ways of life and aptitudes. Why was it that, in the 1980s, China and the Soviet Union moved away from centralised planning? "The answer must be found in the consciousness of the élites and leaders ruling them, who decided to opt for the 'Protestant' life of wealth and risk over the 'Catholic' path of poverty and security."

MR FUKUYAMA takes as his Hegelian mentor the French scholar, Alexandre Kojève, who saw in the societies of post-War Western Europe and in the American way of life the advent of that "universal homogeneous state" which is to herald the end of history.[2] And he goes on to ask the question whether history is now coming to its end, whether there are "any fundamental 'contradictions' in human life that cannot be resolved in the context of modern liberalism, that would be resolvable by an alternative political-economic structure". The article then demonstrates, without much difficulty, that the Fascist and Communist/Socialist challenges to liberalism have been successfully repelled. In China, the Soviet Union, and the developing countries of South-east Asia economic liberalism is trimphing over centralised bureaucratic planning. Religion and nationalism may threaten, but seem unlikely to halt, this process. In international affairs the spread of the "universal homogeneous state" will result in the gradual dying down of conflict, though, no doubt, competition between states will remain, and a question-mark still exists as to the future policies of the Soviet Union: ". . . large-scale conflict must involve large states still caught in the grip of history, and that is what appears to be passing from the scene."

Thus Mr Fukuyama foresees an era of international tranquillity in which a common acceptance of liberal ideology will draw states closer together in what he calls a "'Common Marketization' of world politics".[3]

[1] Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History", in *The National Interest*, Summer 1989, pp.3-18.

[2] Kojève went on to become an official of the Common Market—an impressive instance of a philosopher attaching himself to a conceivable vanguard of history!

[3] Despite Kojève's historic choice, this parallel is not entirely complimentary. Elsewhere in his article, Mr Fukuyama talks of "those flabby, prosperous, self-satisfied, inward-looking, weak-willed states whose grandest project was nothing more heroic than the creation of the Common Market".



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But, oddly enough, he does not find the consequences of the victory of liberalism very satisfactory:

> "The end of history will be a very sad time. The struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one's life for a purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculations, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands. In the post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history."

To borrow Virginia Woolf's remark about Arnold Bennett's novels, at the end of history we are all bound for an eternity of bliss spent in the very best hotel in Brighton.

It is worth noting the intense boredom which, on his own showing, Mr Fukuyama expects from his vision of the future, since from the start it damages the credibility of a seductive series of propositions. "I knew it would be dull, but not so dull as this", said Lord Melbourne after seeing a play by Ben Jonson. Mr Fukuyama's dénouement to the melodrama of history excites the same reaction. Dullness seems to be a characteristic of Utopias—of Sir Thomas More's as much as of Huxley's *Brave New World*—and the smoke signals of ennui betray the utopian character of the "universal homogeneous state". For it is impossible to believe that human nature can be disciplined or medicated to the point of losing its secular content of passion, irrationality and violence. Similarly, it is hard to imagine an international system which does not, in some way or other, reflect the conflicts that exist within individual human beings. For either the system imposes itself on those contradictions, and then what becomes of the freedom which we associate with liberalism? or else they render the "universal state" less "homogeneous", more in conflict with itself and with the individuals it is meant to serve.

Mr Fukuyama defines this state, in a somewhat offhand phrase, as "liberal democracy in the political sphere combined with easy access to VCRs and stereos in the economic"—in other words, democracy plus an industrial positivism which supplies what is needed for the gratification of the consumer. *Panem et circenses*, one might say, if one knew which was the bread and which the circuses. But it will not have escaped the author that this definition contains within it values which are potentially in conflict. Against the individual epicureanism of an almost vertiginous consumer choice—choice of food, drink, toys, holidays, aesthetic and erotic satisfactions—stand the ascetic values of modern industrial organisation demanding from its participants sobriety, reliability and self-discipline.[4] The political power of the voter, often exercised in ignorance of the issues involved in his choice, finds its antithesis in the administrative ideals of those who know—the technocrats and civil servants for whom the desires of *demos* are less important than the dictates of an existing body of knowledge. In other words, what is called liberalism is by no means a unified ideology, but an uneasy balance between elements, which are certainly connected historically, though not necessarily by logic, and which can pull in quite opposite directions. Were their equilibrium to be disturbed by one such element gaining preponderance over the others, then the nature of "the Western *idea*" would change, and it might cease to be definable as "liberalism".[5]

MR FUKUYAMA does not mention the "green" movement, but this—more than religious fundamentalism or nationalism—might be regarded as the most immediate threat to the liberal balance. For the "green" ideal could be said to be a part of consumerism whose disproportionate growth is threatening its own parent. A consumer decision to opt for "green" values would conflict with, and could wreck, the industrial base which supports consumerism itself. It is not possible to "return to nature" in a society whose population size can only be supported by a combination of industry and intensive exploitation of agriculture. Were there to be an attempt to do so, "the abundance of a modern free-market economy" would no longer be there to underwrite and stabilise a durable liberalism. We should be in for a new form of ideology—a sort of anarchic asceticism which would deny to many the gratifications which they wish to have. It would be a dissociation of freedom from consumer choice—a decision which, once taken, would inhibit the possibility of taking others. Consumer choice would be exchanged for freedom to buy only what, at a particular moment, was considered good for space-ship earth by preachers of the "green" gospel.

The "green" movement is one example of a new ideology challenging liberalism, but there could be others. Ideologies are perceptions of the human situation to which, it is believed, they are relevant and to whose problems they provide answers. The question is not whether alternative ideologies to liberalism provide "better" solutions to the "contradictions" in human life. No doubt, they do not. Had Marxism-Leninism been judged on its practical achievements, it would not have got very far; 19th-century socialism was a notable failure in dealing with the problems of the industrial revolution. None the less, ideologies can *appear* to be appropriate to the historical situation before they are tested by history. The satisfactions they afford are psychological—the provision of a framework of belief that gives the believer a sense of order and purpose in his life. The degree to which they coincide with his worldly requirements is fortuitous. Just because liberalism at present seems to have defeated its recent ideological rivals does not mean

[4] Daniel Bell has analysed this clash of values in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1979).

[5] Nor does one element detached from the whole and placed in another context necessarily indicate the spread of liberalism. Consumerism in the Third World will certainly hasten the break-up of ancient habits and traditions, but its insertion into this new social context will not leave its own significance unchanged. It is perfectly possible to imagine that the societies of Asia and Africa will form their new mores out of elements deriving from several sources. The result would be a sort of mosaic in which the original constituent ideas took their meaning from their new place in the pattern. I am not sure, therefore, if the victory of liberalism can be proved, as Mr Fukuyama would like to prove it, by rock music in Rangoon or colour television sets in China.

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that it will not be faced by others in the future, probably arising from some wayward element within its own structure.

That liberalism has outlasted and outperformed the totalitarian ideologies of the 20th century seems unquestionable. Fascism was simply an extreme off-shoot of romantic nationalism, using the techniques of Lenin (e.g. an élite party) and occurring in new states, whose recently discovered national identity required an exacerbated state of feeling to hold it together. Communism had its own philosophy of history, which was capable of generating fervour in its adherents, but was ultimately so much at variance with the realities of social and economic development as to disillusion its followers. One may agree with Mr Fukuyama when he sees in events in Russia and China an admission of defeat on the part of Marxism-Leninism and a success for Western liberalism. It is harder to follow him in his Hegelian assertion that a triumphant liberal consciousness will be with us for ever. Such an idea seems to imply not so much an end to history, as a contradiction of all its lessons.

To tell the truth, the Hegelian motifs in Mr Fukuyama's article, introduced *con brio* though they are, appear decorative rather than essential to the discussion, agreeable baroque embellishments which relieve the drabness of the main structure. What lies behind these claims for the victory of liberalism is something simpler than the drums and trumpets of the Universal Homogeneous State realising the Moral Idea, something that is familiar in American writings on international affairs: the desire for solutions that shall be universally applicable and, therefore, final. Such prescriptive predictions of the future as W. W. Rostow's "Stages of Economic Growth", Zbigniew Brzezinski's theory of the coming "convergence" between the United States and the Soviet Union, Ray Vernon's writings on the role of the multinational company in world affairs—all these have in common the setting-up of a framework which, in the long run, will dispose of historical problems, and the insertion of an optimistic positivism into an apparently objective view of the future.

In this perspective, underdeveloped countries can be seen as doomed to economic "take-off", the Russian bear to lie down with (and increasingly resemble) the American eagle, multinational companies as a sort of privatisation of international understanding. The predictions are not so much analytical as prescriptive; the message they convey is that we do not need to worry because developing countries, American-Soviet relations and the spread of world-wide industrial companies are on a path which will lead them, beyond difficulties and dangers, to a resolution of their problems and ours. These are attempts to remove such matters from history, and, indeed, the automaticity of these scenarios has little to do with the ups-and-downs of real life, the errors and the passions of its protagonists.

Mr Fukuyama appears to be about the same business of eliminating the problematical side of history. Only in his case the ambition is greater. He is trying to dispose of history itself, including the whole of international relations, thereby doing himself out of a job. It is the final solution, the end-game of a tradition of thinking which stems from the Enlightenment. It is a wonderful construct, but is it true? The End of History? Liberalism, Communism, Mr Fukuyama, myself and my readers are all in the stream. We can deny its existence, note that its speed is slowing. But the banks are passing by and the fish still struggle against the current. Becoming shows no sign of transformation into being. But then neither Mr Fukuyama nor the rest of us would much like it were this to happen. History has its sorrows and its cruelties, but at least we have the consolation that these will not last for ever. We are spared the unending world of Huxley's Mustapha Mond and the Controllers. Stability is bought at the price of injustice made permanent. We have the consolations of movement and blessed surprise. To claim them is a normal human instinct. "*Le vent se lève! . . . Il faut tenter de vivre!*" And with what relief. . . .

## Clown Flowers

Three astonished sunflowers
gaze at me over the wall,
frilled faces saucer-eyed
at being so tall
(and being there at all).

Clown flowers;
caricatures; grist
to humorist and advertiser—
unweary of time,
steps to the sun uncounted,
they aspire to *that sweet golden clime*
of Sun Life Insurance
and Flora's harvest of oil
in pure margarine
polyunsaturated.

*Phoebe Hesketh*

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# THEATRE

## Chest & Discipline

*By Malcolm Rutherford*

FIRST, a belated tribute to a book that I have only just read: then a glowing review of a play that I had never seen performed before. The two go together, for the book is *Granville Barker and the Dream of Theatre* by Dennis Kennedy,[1] and the play is Granville Barker's *The Voysey Inheritance* (at the National's Cottesloe Theatre).

Kennedy is an American who, as Granville Barker did, acts, directs and writes. He notes in his book that "there are many students of literature, especially in America, who are amazed to discover that the author of the famous *Prefaces to Shakespeare* had a past as a great director as well". The Americans may be forgiven for their ignorance. Some of us on this side of the Atlantic were none too familiar with the full Granville Barker story either. Besides, Kennedy understates: Granville Barker did almost everything in the theatre that it was possible to do. He also had a pretty extraordinary life. What we needed was a Preface to Granville Barker, so that his development could be seen as a whole, and this is what Kennedy has provided.

Granville Barker was a bit like E. M. Forster, almost all of whose novels were written by 1915, but who lived on to become a literary elder statesman with great, if undefinable, influence. There were also lots of rumours about him. It was often said that he was the son of George Bernard Shaw, though no mother was mentioned. But while Granville Barker did Shaw many favours—like bringing his plays to the stage before anyone else appreciated him—there appears to be no real evidence for the story.

There was, however, a problem about his name, and a peculiarly English one at that, because it involved the insertion of a hyphen. He was born in 1877, the son of Albert James Barker and Mary Elizabeth Bozzi-Granville, and christened Harley Granville. During his stage career he was generally known as Granville Barker. Shortly after World War I he reintroduced the name Harley and put the hyphen between Granville and Barker. That did not go down too well with his old theatrical friends, although there was another reason for their distaste, which I shall come to later.

The confusion about the name remains to this day. When I went to borrow some of his least known plays from the excellent Kensington Library, they were not listed under Granville Barker. An astute librarian found them for me under Barker. The volume in question had last been taken out in 1977, before that ten years earlier, and before that in 1955.

The hyphen apart, his friends turned against him because he abandoned his wife as well as the stage, married an American who was ten years his senior and reputed to be very rich, and took to writing literary criticism (out of which came the *Prefaces to Shakespeare*). He had been married to Lillah McCarthy, the actress who played some of the early Shaw parts. He switched to Helen Huntingdon, a minor poet and novelist, and wife of Archer Huntingdon of the American railroad family. Helen disliked Shaw intensely. Archer was very decent about the break-up of his marriage, and he gave his wife a large income on their divorce. That was in 1917, when Granville Barker was 40. As Kennedy puts it: "He washed off his makeup and took up his pen."

His own best plays were behind him; indeed had been since before the 1914-18 War. He wrote four main works: *The Marrying of Ann Leete, The Voysey Inheritance, Waste,* and *The Madras House*. The only one that has been performed at all frequently since it was written is *The Voysey Inheritance*, possibly because it has a more conventional subject matter than the others and was not sexually shocking when it first appeared. What they all have in common, however, is adult dialogue that commands attention throughout, a magnificent use of the stage, characterisation—lots of choice small parts as well as big ones—and a capacity to surprise. The dialogue, moreover, is not speechified. The lines are short, conversational and intelligent. There is nearly always movement on the stage, and when there is not, there is a reason why. The entire art of the dramatist is here, and also that of the social commentator. One has the impression that Granville Barker would have been equally at home as editor of *The Economist* or as a Member of Parliament as in the theatre. The understanding of public affairs is comprehensive, but it is the theatre that brings it to life.

THE CENSOR TOOK exception to *Ann Leete* and *Waste*: they were refused public performances and only shown privately. Ann Leete is a girl who chooses—in the conventional phrase—to marry beneath herself, for reasons that plainly have more to do with sex than social patronage. In fact, she marries the gardener.

The sexual undertones are clear enough in the text, and should have been understood by audiences used to seeing Shakespeare. But perhaps Shakespearean performances were different before Granville Barker got hold of them. In any case, I am grateful to Dennis Kennedy for the accounts of how some of the best-known theatre critics of the time reviewed the private showings. They wrote that the heroine's motives (for she is a heroine) were incomprehensible. The *Daily Telegraph* man commented: "Why in the name of

[1] *Granville Barker and the Dream of Theatre*. By DENNIS KENNEDY. Cambridge University Press, £9.95.



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reason and common sense did Ann Leete throw over a young, presentable, impassioned and entirely eligible nobleman for a husband socially so much her inferior as John Abud (the gardener)?" A. B. Walkley in *The Times* demanded an explanatory pamphlet. "It must be difficult", he wrote, "to write a play in four acts . . . and throughout them all to keep your audience blankly ignorant of the meaning of it." Apart from that, they enjoyed the production.

The final scene of the play when Ann and John Abud come together in his cottage to consummate their marriage is remarkably tender. It contains the line: "How much light one candle gives! Sit where I may see you." Noël Coward, with feeling. *The Marrying of Ann Leete* was revived by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1975, with Mia Farrow as Ann. It should be revived again.

*Waste* fell foul of the censor because it involves a back-street abortion or "illegal operation", as it was called. A lady in society throws herself in a fit of passion at a potential Prime Minister, becomes pregnant, seeks an abortion, dies in the process, and the threat of the scandal coming out prevents the man from reaching the highest office. The play is not directly about abortion at all: it is about people, society and power. Where I disagree slightly with those who have praised it over the years is that they describe it as Granville Barker's "only tragedy". It has much in common with his other works, but is perhaps a darker social comedy. Probably it depends on how you play it, but again we need to see it to know.

*The Madras House* is certainly a comedy, though not without sadness. Madras is a fashion house in London in the process of being taken over by an American. Its original owner, Constantine Madras, has gone off to the East to live with a harem. Most of the other characters are more or less normal, and indeed even Constantine talks about his Eastern preferences in a perfectly rational way. His son, Philip, is rather less physically involved with women. "I do so hate that farm-yard world of sex", he says. And to his wife, Philip explains: "I treat you as a man would treat another man . . . neither better nor worse. Is the compliment quite wasted?" His sexual indifference does not appear wholly to impair their relationship. The play ends with the two of them—Philip and his wife—staring into the drawing-room fire, happy to be together.

*Madras House* is eminently stageable and actable. It also contains one scene of sheer cabaret camp: a fashion show in the Madras House itself, put on for the benefit of the American buyer. Anyone who could write and produce that, as Granville Barker did, was bound to be at home when he came to producing (say) the court scenes in Shakespeare. It is the ultimate in professionalism: the play within the play.

*The Voysey Inheritance* is straightforward by comparison: no abortions, no harems, and not a great many women. It is very largely a play about men, and men involved in financial, not political affairs. The elder Voysey tells his son, Edward, that he has been effectively cheating his clients for years, spending their capital and juggling their dividends. He has always got away with it, though at times it has been a close-run thing. Then the elder Voysey dies. Edward is left with the choice of giving up, going to prison, or juggling the accounts back into shape by masterly financial investment. He chooses the latter, though that, too, is touch and go. One of the attractions of the play is the development of Edward from juvenile prig to master of the firm and master of the Voysey family. It is an actor's challenge, superbly taken in the Cottesloe production by Jeremy Northam. In the beginning, I did not think that he could do it. I was convinced about half-way through. That, I suppose, is part of the art.

About half a dozen other characters are plum parts in their own right: for example, Peacey, the head clerk, who knows of the corruption and has benefited from it, but would never dream of putting his son into the partnership because that would be going too far. Peacey just wants more cash payments from the firm for keeping silent—and so that he can get his son through Cambridge. Mrs Voysey, wife then widow of the leader of the firm, is dominating and hard of hearing. Strange what power deaf people have: they can turn their hearing up, or turn it down as they choose. Then there is Major Booth Voysey, the military member of the family, who is almost "into society" and who knows what he thinks about everything: "What England needs is chest. Chest and discipline", he says. Robert Swann gave him facial movements to match. And not least, poor Hugh Voysey, the artist. He walks to London from Hampstead and becomes disgusted: "You'd think an empire would be able to keep the streets clean." That line went down particularly well on one of the days of the transport strikes, since quite a lot of us must have walked to the theatre.

One could go on—it is the professionalism that I admire, the staging as well: the apparently effortless moves from office in Lincoln's Inn to dining-room in Chislehurst. The Cottesloe does not have much space for that. The actors, moving their own sets, did it with chest and discipline.

Granville Barker's *dream*—the one referred to in the title of Dennis Kennedy's book—was of a National Theatre. He did not see it realised, but he was right about one thing: it needed more than one stage, and posthumously he achieved that wish. Although I do not much like the present National Theatre myself, I suspect that, if it did not exist, I would be campaigning for one.

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# LETTERS

## Intellectual Exile?

MY EXILE in France, enjoyable in itself, is even more so when each month's ENCOUNTER comes. With the BBC World News Service it sustains a serviceable umbilical cord. Current Affairs—Literature—the Arts! The latter two are handsomely catered for. But, in 1989, can current affairs be covered with so little addressed to economic developments and their implications for Britain?

Please, less obsessive Kremlin-watching and more of a subject so integral to our own day!

RONALD ST. BLAIZE-MOLONY

*Notre Dame de Riez*
*France*

## Funding the Arts

SHEILA LAWLOR (ENCOUNTER, January 1989) raises a fundamental question about public funding for the arts that vexes creative minds on both sides of the Atlantic. It seems that neither the Thatcher nor the Bush Administration has found a suitable policy; increasingly what persuades political officials of public spending is no proper guide to that endeavour. While, in the long run, tears or laughter may be the disinterested response to the efforts of modern democracies to serve as patrons, immediate dangers to the arts, equally so the letters, compel a further search for better solutions before creativity finds itself bankrupted by its political masters.

The recent turn in British arts policy is depressingly familiar to Americans. The gloom darkening the picture is that what is new in Britain is old here. Indentured service describes the terms of the deal struck between the arts and the democratic state. Both the arts and the humanities are stuck with the Faustian organisations the democratic state must use as intermediaries to dispense its funds. Servitude has been hardest for those persons and activities more deserving of public support. Confusion may be the kindest description for those others whose desperation for money deludes them in the hope that some measure of creative independence can be preserved.

The future of this latest turn in British policy is evident in both the American National Endowments. It doesn't work. "Regionalisation" is what the US practises: spread the money about, and pay off the culture bureaucrats, as if equity and excellence are identical. In turn, elected politicians receive several goods, such as assured invitations to fashionable events, the timely company of (in-) famous artists and men of letters (especially at election time), and from those who would dispense public funds, flattery for having done their duty to higher civilisation. That combination as seen from the studio or the library looks like another "iron triangle", a self-serving alliance first developed to service commercial interests among the permanent government, its temporary masters, and voters.

A closed circle results, in which the good gets degraded to the popular, and the most politically popular defines what is good. Uncommon opinion is utterly discounted. As a rough measure of the costs, reckon how American funds get divided into three unequal parts: for each dollar about half is pork-barrel, another third is fashion, and perhaps one-fifth is wisely invested. A lottery would do as much good at less cost because chance would not be handicapped by public weight.

If the pattern described by Lawlor holds for British policy, among the costs will be the loss of hope for turning things around. A few American intellectuals have endured in the belief that the British example might bar the rise of more vulgar taste. Instead, we hear, so far, futile criticism from the Prince of Wales, though much magnified by the press beyond the penetrations of Tom Wolfe and Hilton Kramer into those empty realms. Yet one sees a witless blessing of the banal in art, literature, and scholarship. Britain seems to have caught the American disease.

WHILE ARISTOCRATS, born and made, lament the deplorable results of the alliance between the state and a new cadre of culture bureaucrats, both our governments feed an oligargic system. The real cost is to be found not in public accounts, but offence against public taste. Clothing that cost in ideological garb, Left or Right, is still carnival. The dynamic of the politics of the arts and humanities in the public arena demands further attention. It sounds to me Neronian.

The state may not know that it is fiddling with art; public sensibilities burn, fuelled by slow anger over insults rendered against it. Recently, the critic John Simon surveyed an eight-year battle in New York City to remove an alleged piece of sculpture, commonly thought to be a public eyesore, described neutrally as "a 12-foot high, 120-foot-long, slightly curving wall of rusting pitted steel".

"Tilted Arc" is the name for the barrier erected, at a cost beyond the $175,000 fee paid its maker, across a public square. Now it is stored in three sections in a government warehouse. The artist sulks and threatens further legal actions if the remains are ever displayed elsewhere. Rightly, Simon draws the lesson in this sorry episode to be: "It means the artist, once anonymous, selfless, and concerned only with making something beautiful to the greater glory of God, man, or art, has become a huckster, hustler, hypocrite peddling an old—or rather, any new—concoction to the greater glory of his trendy self."

As patron, the state piles errors into monumental form while it balances concerns of both Intellectuals and Philistines. An older term to describe the results, both for politics and the arts, is Corinthianised.

PHILIP N. MARCUS

*Fairfield*
*Connecticut*

## Manipulating the West?

ANTHONY HARTLEY (in "Saving Mr Rushdie?" in the June ENCOUNTER) revives his earlier observation of a "growing indifference in Africa and Asia to a tradition of Western humanism".

When was either Asia or Africa ever anything but indifferent to our traditions? The "imposition" of the values cited by Mr Hartley was never more than skin deep; post-colonial experience has proved this, again and again. The important phenomenon concerning these areas, and including the Middle East and Latin America, is their *use* of Western humanism and its rhetoric (human rights, liberation, self-determination, etc.) as tools to disarm and manipulate Western public opinion.

The "growing indifference" exists not in those alien and barbarian environments but in "the West", and it is growing in an interesting manner. The use of humanistic rhetoric by the most obvious tyrants outside "the West" has recruited many uncritical (not to say wilfully blind) fans for these tyrants, expecially among those Westerners who pride themselves on being "liberal". Current examples of such manipulators are the ANC, SWAPO, the PLO, and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas. Their soft-headed acolytes in "the West" have been easily persuaded to excuse or ignore policies and acts that violate Western humanist tradition and are as inimical to it as, say, the recent suppression of democratic enthusiasm in China. Journalists, prominent entertainers, politicians, academics, and members of the public have been thus suckered in Britain and Europe, and in the United



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States the same ranks have included not a few Democrats—members of Congress and others. It is this "growing indifference to a tradition of Western humanism"—using the tradition against itself—that should concern us; it is far more dangerous to us than such indifference among other cultures and peoples, for whom our values have very shallow roots, when they have any at all.

HERB GREER

*Manchester*

## Religion & Dyslexia

PROFESSOR STOVE's tribute to Julian Jaynes ("The Oracles and Their Cessation", ENCOUNTER, April), raises a few questions. A modest dyslexian may venture a reply. I shall not claim to be an oracle, hear voices, or anything like that—only that having a brain with a lexical problem does provide certain insights into the matters he so bravely raises. Dyslexians are to some extent like the "pre-Fall" man Stove refers to in his article. We tend to have a larger area of brain in our right hemisphere compensating for the deficit in our left. Possibly, we are the closest to a bicameral mind that he may encounter.

Firstly, I would suggest he look no further than the invention of the alphabet to account for the catastrophic downfall of the decameral mind. I am possibly prejudiced here, but it was not the cleverest invention to burden the human brain with, now we know a little bit more about how the brain actually functions. Our written language could be greatly improved upon to the benefit of everybody. Shakespeare did very well with his own semantic shorthand, Charactery, for instance.

Before we do so, though, we should answer the other main questions in Professor Stove's article. Would this improvement be to any real advantage? Is religion a racket or a form of madness, or both? Would removing the catastrophic lexical written language from the mind of modern man lead to certain "undesirable" regressions?

I seriously doubt this. I notice no unusual pathological religiosity in dyslexics and dyslexians. I am myself an enlightened Kantian pietist and quietist in finding the moral law within and the starry heavens above the two most wondrous things. God is either a semantic problem, or the authority, or name, we give to our ultimate concern. I see no further.

I would suggest that all religious institutions (like other human institutions) provide sufficient grounds for racketeering and madness, but not necessary ones. As institutions, they are of more than anthropological interest: they are a mystery about a mystery. Surely accepting something for what it is *is* another kind of enlightenment?

Lastly, this tribute to Julian Jaynes appears to me to miss the main thrust of his modern emphasis in the human sciences. We are beginning to escape from the Cartesian chains in Western thought, by looking at the mind as "what the brain does". (By "Cartesian chains", I mean the implied "mind/body" dualism. "What the brain does" is more direct—Cohn Blakemore made this point in his closing lecture in his TV series.) Once this Copernican Revolution is made in Western thought—I shall not say philosophy—many conceptual problems may find their solution, not least in coming to terms with dyslexia, schizophrenia, and many other human problems.

ROBIN FRANCIS

*Society of Dyslexians*
*Marlborough*

THE INVENTION of writing is discussed at length in Jaynes's book. (I made no mention of this in my article: it is simply one of his many topics which I could not find room for.) Robin Francis suggests that the "breakdown of the bicameral mind" was *caused* by the invention of writing. Jaynes would put the causal order the other way round, I think. But he would agree with Robin Francis in regarding the two events as closely connected.

D. C. STOVE

*Mulgoa*
*Australia*

## "A Taste in the Head"

SURELY the purpose of commenting on a dead (and neglected) writer is to do with reappraisal. Anna Adams ("The Indicating Eye", May 1989) doles out more dis-praise than anything, most of which is conditioned by the imposition of simplified criteria of judgment. The self-regarding tone of her note is not important, but what matters a great deal is her disservice to Herbert Read's poetry.

"Having written his war poems" seems to be a way of suggesting that by 1919, the publication date of *Naked Warriors*, Read is supposed to have finished with the War (which, if any, of these poets ever finished with it?). But this glancing summary serves to obscure the existence of one of the best, most sustained poems to come out of the conflict, Read's "The End of a War" (1933), a work Adams does not mention. "A Short Poem for Armistice Day" is similarly neglected; and she passes over one of the finest poems to come out of World War II, "To a Conscript of 1940", a work that manages a subtle (and *sensuous*) entanglement with Read's apprehensions of the First War.

How does she manage to miss these poems? Taste, perhaps? But taste is often underpinned by assumptions, for her the key ones apparently being "abstract generalisations" and "tangible things" (old favourites if ever there were any). Adams has simplified her discussion—and perhaps a passive reader's appreciation—of Read's poetry by the imposition of these polarities, thereby implying that no mode of expression and response between the two exists. But something else between "abstract" and "tangible" is alive, even if it is more difficult to identify—something akin to what G. S. Fraser vehemently, and amusingly, trade-marked as "a taste in the head". It is the point at which the idea, not the same thing as Adams's "abstract generalisations", acquires a sensuous and delicate tone and rhythm which few poets achieve (or perhaps want to achieve). But this does not mean that it is not valuable. Just the contrary, since the sensibility, the sensuous idea, which acquires its sensuousness


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through its intensity, and its active thinking, forms a considerable, rare creation, which we find in "The End of a War" and other poems by Read.

Read's poetry, except in anthologies, is out of print. We badly need a *Selected Poems*, but Anna Adams's insensitive paraphrase of Read's achievement as a poet is unlikely to help this on.

Incidentally, Read's "mentors" (her word) were not, as Adams claims they were, so much Whitman and Lawrence, as the Imagists. Read makes this clear in his "autobiographies", *The Contrary Experience* (1963). "The End of a War" finely, and with rare suppleness, develops Read's literary origins by the straightforward method of including them.

JON SILKIN

*Newcastle-on-Tyne*

I'M SORRY to have aroused Jon Silkin's ire on the subject of Herbert Read, but if I am "self-regarding", Silkin sounds proprietorial, as though he resents an independent opinion. We both agree, though, that Read is a neglected poet whose best work deserves to be in print again. Very few of the people I meet know him as a poet at all, but after many artists' deaths their reputations suffer eclipse, to reappear 20 or 30 years later, if they deserve to. However, the process of re-emergence requires some demand to make itself felt. My essay was intended to arouse interest, and perhaps I ought to be pleased to have been thought to have been trying to knock down an already recumbent poet, thus conjuring up another champion.

To make exaggerated claims for a poet's work tends to arouse more antagonism than enthusiasm, for we all know that no one makes masterpieces all the time. Silkin himself, in his foreword to *First World War Poetry*, (Penguin, 1979), says that Read's "minor mode" was imagism, and "Read's language is the language of ideas despite his attachment to imagism". I think that he wrote his major poems in his minor mode because, though no one should be only an imagist, imagism plays a part in all poetry—"philosophy in terms of experience". It seems to me that when the language of ideas takes over entirely, the poems do not wake the reader's imagination and even the thought becomes hard to follow. Read himself said that the vitality of language is arrived at through the senses.

He knew this but couldn't always do it. There is a great deal of difference between "The End of a War" and "A Short Poem for Armistice Day", two of the three poems included in Silkin's anthology. The first contains the hypothetical thoughts of three characters in a dreadful real-death drama, and the second speaks in the collective voice of the maimed workers at a factory for artificial poppies:

*no seed they have no seed*
*their tendrils are of wire and grip*
*the buttonhole, the lip*
*and never fade*

The poem contains one abstract line:

*I have no power therefore have patience*

which is used twice, almost as a refrain, and the whole poem conveys the sense that it is an almost involuntary expression of anger and compassion. I'm sorry I didn't mention it, but one can't mention everything. Herbert Read wrote a lot of good poems and some fustian.

"Having written his war poems", I admit, should have been "having written these war poems", yet "A Short Poem for Armistice Day" could be considered to be a peace poem.

I don't intend to be self-regarding, but I am not an academic nor an oracle. As an explorer of literature, it seems to me to be possible to write about it in the way that travel writing is done. One can describe the adventures that lead to the changing of one's mind. I find it more interesting to read about a man walking over a mountain—disturbing curlews, falling in bogs, and getting lost and found—than to read a geological account of the mountain or to measure it from far off. So I write my explorer's notebooks, and I'm sorry that Jon Silkin doesn't approve, though he did once publish a peace-poem of mine.

ANNA ADAMS

*London*

## "Schiller, Go Home!"

WHAT YOUR "Berlin Notebook" recorded in the local Prussian scene goes just as well for Vienna. Habsburg pieties are just as flimsy when it comes to observing a certain respect for classical texts. And there is in Vienna no Karl Kraus around—now that Friedrich Torberg is ten years dead—to excoriate the low, mean, uninspired spirits who, in their arid uncreativeness, take play after play and bowdlerise them into meaningless "relevance".

The latest of these monstrosities—and M. J. Lasky should add it to his already extensive list of vandalism at work ("Towards a Negative Cultural Tax", ENCOUNTER, April 1989)—I saw at the recent première of *Wilhelm Tell*, Schiller's famous play in the new production by Claus Peymann: another one of those infamous directors who have become famous by turning and twisting every play as if it were a plot of his own.

Well, to begin with, Peymann is a rebel of the '68 vintage, and so whiffs of the atmosphere of the "Student Revolt" linger over the stage. Protesters against injustice lie down on the street, and when the tyrant Gessler comes on to the scene—in a jeep, of course!—he hesitates to run over the Gandhian non-violent demonstration, which leaves him a sitting target, IRA-fashion, for the single mortal shot by the deadly marksman Wilhelm Tell. I found it a little ambiguous whether Peymann wanted to say that violence or non-violence is the way to struggle for justice; or perhaps he intended a united front of the two rebel camps. Nor did I quite grasp the point of putting Gessler's symbolic "hat of authority" on a stage-designed penis, as if the old sexual-revolutionaries of '68 were giving valuable phallic symbols away to the enemy. In any case, the true enemy emerges when the protest slogan (echoing the revered "*Yankee Go Home!*") appears on the wall: "*Gessler—geh hoam!*"

In the cold wintry night after the vow, Tell's men warm up with hot coffee out of thermos flasks and plastic cups. And so many cigarettes are smoked during the long evening on the stage that the Plague in the Middle Ages must have been death from lung cancer.

There is, thus, very little left of the "*hohle Gasse*" of Schiller's medieval Swiss canton. It is more like a busy winter's day on Zurich's *Bahnhofstrasse*, with everybody hurrying by, carrying their shopping-bags. Schiller's final scene, with its suggestion of a happy-end reconciliation of struggling classes, has been cut. To Schiller's sturdy swords Peymann has added the presumably favourite attire of the Middle Ages—what we call "*ein Smoking*" or what you call "black tie" (and the swords will be worn inside the dinner-jacket). When Schiller puts a scene under a linden tree where the couple (Staufferer and Gertrud) are seated, Peymann puts them horizontal, naturally, in a large double-bed. And when in the course of events Schiller's hated tyrannical wall is torn down, *don't* worry: it isn't the Berlin Wall, only a suggestion of the Bastille's storming in this anniversary year of the 1789 Revolution.

FOR THE enthusiastic reviewer in the liberal-Left *Die Zeit* (Rolf Michaelis, 31 March) this is not at all a "modernised" Schiller; oh no, not a "restructured" one either. Perish the thought that it has been in any way "up-dated". It only exhibits the great classical

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playwright in a "new relevance". And then Herr Michaelis goes on to think, one verse at a time, of the Bastille storming; Gorbachov; Viet Nam; Afghanistan; Delacroix's Marianne climbing the barricades; the *SS* and *Gestapo* (like them, Gessler's cronies wear long, black-leather coats); the *maquis* of the French Resistance (like them, Tell's rebels wear berets). Occasionally during the four hours in the Burg Theatre thoughts also come to him of the Warsaw Ghetto and, last but not least, the Student Rebellion of '68.

Only the pathos of victory is dropped. The *Zeitgeist* no longer calls for clenched fists, "Right on!", the triumph of the young and the new. Revolutions don't happen to be wearing happy ends nowadays. Peymann is pessimistic. Wilhelm Tell won't bring true and lasting freedom either. To talk about it too much is to foster the illusion that the Establishments of our day have inherited the rights and liberties fought for by rebels and dissidents over the centuries.

CURIOUSLY, SCHILLER's play suffered a related ideological twisting in Germany during the Nazi régime. At first, Hitler and the Third *Reich*'s culture-vultures liked to have *Wilhelm Tell* played. It reminded them of their heroic resistance (against Versailles, against Weimar) in their march to power. Later on they considered it dangerous, even subversive; it might occur to somebody in the audience to resist *them*! Thus, on 3 June 1941, Hitler's faithful Martin Bormann conveyed the *Führer*'s message in a lapidary sentence to the governmental authorities:

> "It is the *Führer*'s wish that Schiller's play, *Wilhelm Tell*, no longer be played and no longer be taught in the schools."

This was at least logical. But, in the here-and-now among all this mish-mash *gauchisme*, it is cock-eyed to omit the famous line of historic medieval liberation: "*Und frei erklär' ich alle meine Knechte* (I declare all my serfs to be free)". What does remain is the flag of victory which has scrawled on it (in red, in English) the world "FREE". If this means "without charge", then you can reach for the coffee and cigarettes. If it suggests "Free at Last", you can have an additional thought, at no extra expense, for Martin Luther King.

Goethe read Schiller's original manuscript and didn't quite like it (although he put it on in Weimar): too much romantic politics, he thought. What would he have made of *Wilhelm Tell* a couple of centuries later? Both Goethe and Schiller may well now be taking the sacred vow, the "*Weimar Schwur*", to stop little local tyrants from exploiting every piece in world literature in order to serve the tantrums of their own infantile playfulness.

FRIEDA KANTOR

*Vienna*

## Sexual Politics

I HIGHLY appreciated Vladimir Voinovich's observations on Soviet political leaders, especially his pertinent discovery of a certain relation between being hairy and a Hawk, and between being bald and a Dove ("The Bald & the Hairy", ENCOUNTER, February 1989).

I am looking forward to reading in one of the future issues of ENCOUNTER about the findings of some research into analogies between political ideas of the politicians and the length of their respective penises.

Let me warn the would-be researchers that the task to establish such an analogy is bound to be difficult, because . . . more and more women are getting into politics nowadays.

With regard to Voinovich's dilemma of how to select leading cadres, I would suggest depilation. It is not painful, albeit undemocratic.

The advice given by the author: "Beware of the Hairy; watch out for the Bald" could be deceiving because of fairly successful hair transplants.

RYSZARD KURYLSKI

*Paives*
*Portugal*

## Principles & Propaganda

DENYS SUTTON follows most others in the debate over the Victoria & Albert Museum reforms in apportioning blame solely to one side or the other (ENCOUNTER, June 1989). In defence of the director and trustees it should be said that affairs had not been altogether happy before their advent. And even if the state of the roofs was not the fault of the keepers, they must bear some blame for the state of the records. Mrs Esteve-Coll, on the other part, has to her credit the reform of the Library, which was long overdue.

The complacency with which Sir John Pope-Hennessy has been able to view the state of the Museum in his time owes something to the fact that his interest, Italian Renaissance sculpture, has been one of the jewels in the Museum's crown. Other collections have suffered from lack of space, lack of a proper remit, competition from the British Museum (especially in medieval and oriental art), and a mass of miscellaneous collections which keepers with more specific interests will always be disinclined to inventory properly.

The blame for this must go back to the last century and to the failure of governments then to tackle the proper ordering of the national collections. In 1863, Mr Beresford Hope complained to the Royal Academy Commission about the then South Kensington Museum and the difficulties and troubles the Architectural Museum had there:

> "We have been driven from pillar to post; we are first allotted a space, then we find it is wanted for something else, then the educational department or the food department is predominant, then somebody gives a collection of pictures that have to be hung up, then, perhaps, the collection is got into a little order and a museum of Italian art is opened to the public, when suddenly there is an exhibition of wedding presents, and everything else is shunted."

He agreed with the description of the embryo V&A as being "too much of a Noah's ark", and advocated having "a department of art, with a first-class minister" to sort out the muddle, a proposal which appears to be anathema to Denys Sutton, but which will be the only way in the long run to sort out the basic confusion in the national collections which is causing trouble not only at the V&A, but at the Tate Gallery and British Museum.

The V&A's attempt to get out of its mess unaided has provoked all sorts of criticisms being hurled at it. Mr Sutton says that "the wishes of a testator, William Dyce, were flouted by lending a picture from his Bequest". But before the present controversy Graham Reynolds pointed out that the wishes of another benefactor, John Sheepshanks, are now ignored. And of course those of J. M. W. Turner for his bequest to the National Gallery have been the subject of a much greater *coup d'état* by the transference of much of it to the Tate Gallery and the disregard of all the conditions he attached to it. If Denys Sutton and others took a consistent line about the flouting of testators' wishes, their comments would earn greater respect. But in the "scholarly" art world principles and consistency yield to propaganda.

SELBY WHITTINGHAM

*London*

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# *Life & Letters Today*

*London*

STORMY WEATHER: **The mystery of why British schoolchildren are apparently naughtier than those overseas, compelling teachers here to hang on to the cane long after the rest of Europe, can at last be explained. It is all down to the British weather.**

**Researchers at Lancaster University, after taking temperature, wind and rainfall readings near a Cumbrian comprehensive with 1,217 pupils, have established a statistically significant relationship between weather and disruptive incidents.**

**They concluded that, contrary to popular staffroom belief's, children behave marginally better during high winds. Rain had no significant effect. But children were naughtier in the cold. The biggest influence on pupil behaviour, however, was the extent to which temperature changed during the day.**

**The British weather, of course, is notoriously changeable, and in the United States, where schools also have discipline problems, temperatures can fluctuate wildly. The bad news for teachers is that, as the greenhouse effect progresses, the weather will become more erratic.**

*THE INDEPENDENT*

*Aberystwyth*

WELSH WHISPERS: *Staff at the National Library of Wales, in Aberystwyth, are refusing to cooperate with a study into their jobs unless the inspector in charge speaks Welsh.*

*They say they find it daunting to speak to inspectors in English because "our work is done and discussed in Welsh, the approach is Welsh, and the terms are Welsh." The Welsh Office is trying to find an inspector who speaks the language.*

*SUNDAY TELEGRAPH*

*Berlin*

OUT OF THE COLD: **The editors of the classic Langenscheidt dictionary are going along with "die Zeitgeist", the spirit of the times. In the latest edition of their English-German "Wörterbuch" (1988) they have decided to include such items as "Yuppies", "Rumpies" and "Woopies", even "fucking cold". They are included in the 8% additional entries. In an appendix the grateful reader can find a synchronisation of Anglo-Saxon shoe sizes.**

*DER TAGESSPIEGEL*

*London*

LINGUISTIC NAIVETY: *It would have taken a very sharp ear to detect the rumble of a falling bastion in the news that Marlborough College is to become fully co-educational by September 1989.*

*John Dancy, the former headmaster who brought girls into the sixth form in 1968, would not have dared go so far. "I would have funked it", he said. "I had certain rather naive assumptions—for example, that the presence of girls might improve the boys' language—that didn't turn out to be the case."*

*DAILY TELEGRAPH*

*Paris*

ALL AT SEA: **The captain of the US aircraft carrier "Theodore Roosevelt", when asked how he felt about American forces being under the command of a French admiral, was quoted as responding:**

**"We all kind of interface. There has been a lot of close synergism with the French."**

**Some questions suggest themselves: Does Captain Dayton Ritt always talk like that? Did the French admiral speak English? If so, what did he make of Captain Ritt's communications? How could that remark possibly be translated? And what would Theodore Roosevelt say?**

*INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE*

*Atlanta, Georgia*

WHAT WE CALL IT: *Reebok International Ltd, which became a $1.79 billion-a-year company on the strength of its high fashion sneakers, is counting on high technology to keep its narrowing lead over Nike Inc. in the $7 billion worldwide sports-shoe market.*

*Accompanied by blaring pop music, flashing coloured lights and an enormous video screen, a Reebok executive described a new sneaker code-named "Dr Detroit" that will have a tiny "trampoline" in its sole. Reebok also plans to produce a shoe whose colour can be changed by inserting a special cartridge in the heel, a shoe that inflates to increase ankle support, and one that uses a honeycomb padding that can be found in the seats of the space shuttles.*

*The company's senior vice-president for marketing said: "We call it performance-panache."*

*NEW YORK TIMES*

*London*

CURRYING FAVOUR: **Have you ever stopped to consider what you are saying when you talk about somebody currying favour [Philip Howard asks]? Favour is an ignorant corruption of favel, meaning fallow-coloured, the French *fauve*.**

**Favel was the name of the fallow centaur in the early 14th-century satirical romance *Fauvel*. This beast symbolized cunning and bestial degradation. To curry is to stroke or smooth down. To curry Favel is to enlist the services of duplicity; and so to seek to obtain by insincere flattery, to ingratiate oneself by sycophantic officiousness, in short to behave like MPs (or journalists for that matter) on the make. Puttenham's *English Poesie*, 1589: "Sometimes a creeper, and a curry favel with his superiors."**

**But this is not the end of the matter. Favel is said to be an acronym for the vices of the medieval Church. *Viz:***

**F: Fornication (or some other word beginning with F).**
**A: Averice**
**V: Venalite**
**E: Envie**
**L: Lecherie.**

**It may even be true.**

*THE TIMES*

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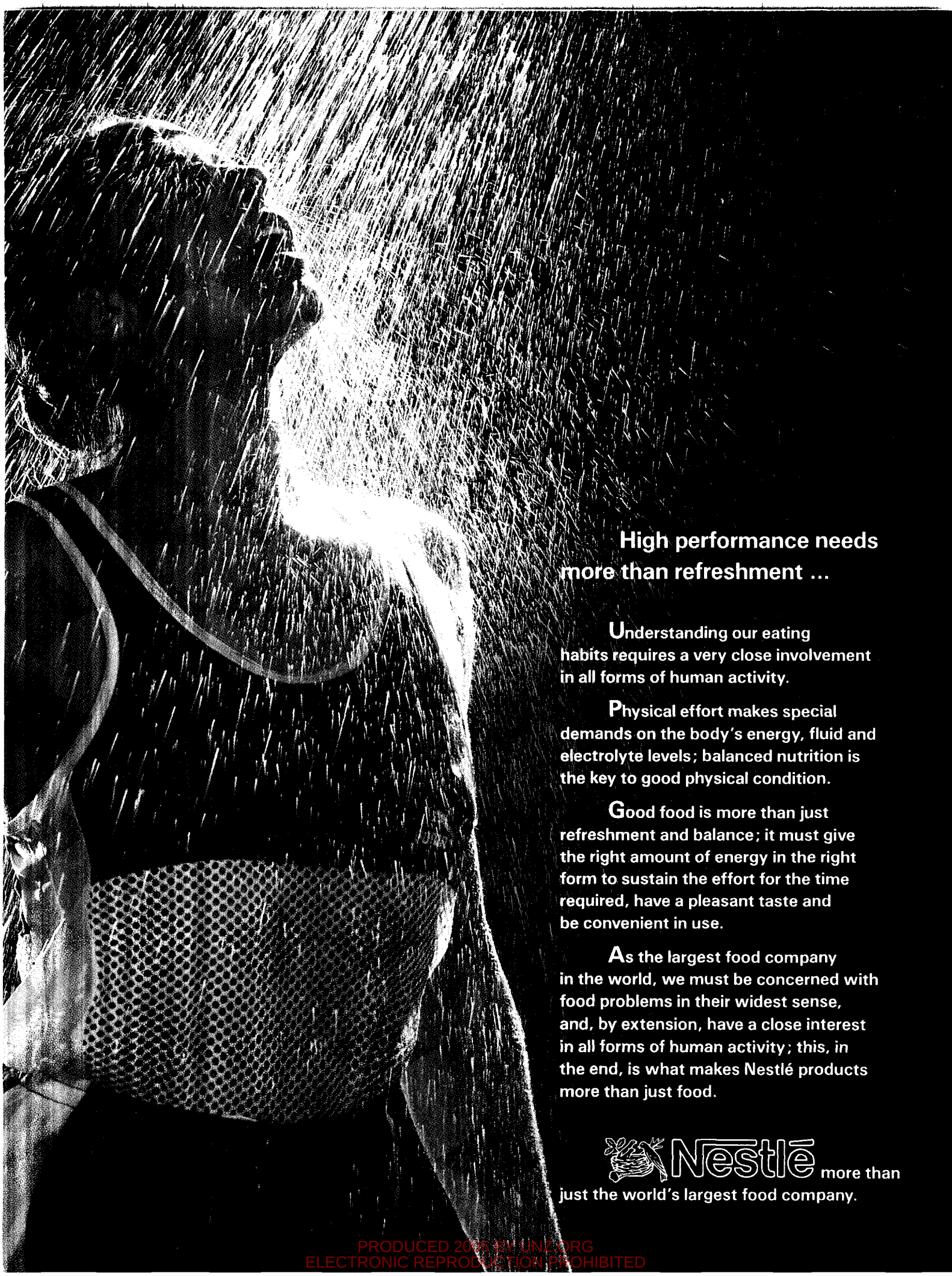

## High performance needs more than refreshment ...

Understanding our eating habits requires a very close involvement in all forms of human activity.

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Nestlé more than just the world's largest food company.

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# "Dazzlingly original"

writes Allen Lacy in the *New York Times Book Review*
about John Gerassi's *Jean-Paul Sartre*

"Here one finds a biographer who wonders out loud whether writing a biography is really something that can be done at all. The result is both refreshing and illuminating."

Lacy continues, "I doubt that in the whole history of biographical literature there is anything to compare with Sartre's relation to John Gerassi. Mr Gerassi's parents, Fernando and Stépha, were good friends of Sartre, and he modeled characters in his novel 'Les Chemins de la Liberté' on them. Just before Mr. Gerassi was born in July 1931, Sartre, André Breton, Joan Miró and Marc Chagall awaited the event with Fernando Gerassi in a cafe. The others became too drunk to leave the cafe, but Sartre went to the hospital to check on the progress of his friend's labor, arriving there just in time to see his future biographer as a newborn infant. John Gerassi entered life as Jean Gerassi, named after Sartre but without the Paul.

" 'Jean-Paul Sartre' is an intellectual biography that effectively explores the complexities of Sartre's thinking and the successive philosophical and political positions he espoused and publicized. It is also filled with some wonderful gossip along the way.... This autobiographical and biographical memoir is delightful. It shows admiration and affection for one of the leading philosophers of the 20th century, but it hasn't a trace of false adulation in it, or of hero worship. Mr. Gerassi is candid about some of Sartre's inconsistencies and shortcomings, and his book as a result is the very stuff of life."

# Jean-Paul Sartre

*Hated Conscience of His Century*

*Volume 1: Protestant or Protester?*

JOHN GERASSI

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